



IFPAA League Rules (Junior - 8-year olds)



Junior Baseball - 8-year olds

GENERAL: This is the first year that the kids will be exposed to realistic baseball. In other words, it is time to transition away from the T-Ball type rules that are especially crafted for beginners and move toward an intermediate phase of baseball. There are a number of advanced concepts that are instituted: child pitching, strikeouts, called pitches, a set outfield, tagging up, and a live ball. In making this transition, 8-year old baseball tends to be possibly the sloppiest of all the years of organized baseball. With that in mind, we have tried to structure the rules to allow the games to be as enjoyable as possible, while enhancing competition and allowing for the learning of the new ideas. There are still many concepts that remain restricted from this phase of baseball which will come in later years - these are: taking leads, stealing, bunting, walks, passed balls, and the infield fly rule.

The goal this year is to introduce and teach a new array of skills to the kids, increase their levels of awareness and responsibility within the game by expanding the range of potential outcomes on the field and moderately turn up the competitive level.

FIELD: The field dimensions for Junior League consist of bases 55 feet apart. There is no foul ball arc in front of Home Plate (every fair ball is in play) and the pitcher's line is 40 feet from home plate. The home team is responsible for preparing the field for each game. This includes setting the bases, lining and raking the field, doing any general tidying up needed and making all decisions on field conditions due to weather. Halfway lines are used between 1st and 2nd base, 2nd and 3rd base, and 3rd base & home.

EQUIPMENT: Uniform shirts and hats are provided by the league, with the kids able to keep both. Kids are asked to provide their own pants. The pants must be the standard issue black baseball pants with no stripes. Bats, helmets and catcher's equipment are provided in equipment bags for the managers. Balls will be provided to the managers by the league. We will be using regular baseballs this season. The kids must bring their own gloves and baseball shoes, and may bring bats if they wish, but everything should be prominently marked as equipment has a tendency to get misplaced at this age. **STEEL-SPIKED SHOES ARE NOT PERMITTED.** All batting helmets are **REQUIRED** to have a facemask. No player will be allowed to bat without wearing a batting helmet with a facemask. Catchers will be required to wear a cup at all times

PLAYERS: There will be 6 infielders: First Base, Second Base, Shortstop, Third Base, Pitcher and Catcher. The outfield shall consist of four players at all times which serves to standardize play and remove some of the traffic problems evident in T-Ball. By using the fielding positions as described above, ten players should be on the field at all times. For teams that have more than 10 players at a game, it will become necessary to sit one or more children out each inning in the field. To deal with this situation, a rule has been created to ensure fairness: *In order to keep ten players on the field at all times, a player rotation must be established. This rotation should be talent-neutral, in other words, every player on the team must sit out one inning before the rotation starts all over again. Typically, a complete rotation should take one and one-half to two games. The manager has complete discretion as to which inning to sit out a player within the confines of the rotation, but under NO circumstances should a child ever sit out twice in one game.*



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This field rotation does not affect the batting order, everybody bats in regular turn. A related matter concerns position rotation. Each player must play a minimum of two innings in the infield up to a maximum of four. Conversely, a player must play a minimum of two innings in the outfield up to a maximum of four. A "sitting-out" inning may not be counted against any minimum requirements. In addition, a player may only play a maximum of two innings at any one position.

CALLUPS: No call-up may play any more innings in the infield, or in total than any regular player on the team, and must bat last in the lineup, unless someone shows up later. Pitching the call-up is prohibited. Managers must adhere to the IFPAA Handbook policy regarding call-ups.

GAME: The games will be six innings in duration. Each inning will end after three outs, on the play that scores the sixth run, or on the play in which the last player in the entire lineup has batted that inning. Even after the sixth run scores that play is allowed to run its course, during which time any runs that score will be counted. When two teams have different numbers of players, the smaller team will bat extra players to equal the lineup size of the larger team, if needed. Games should run no longer than two hours. NO GAME can run into the next time period. Any game reaching that point must be stopped immediately. A game halted during play for weather or time limit reasons will be considered complete if the losing team has batted at least four innings. Games called before this point can be rescheduled with the agreement of both managers. *NOTE: During the playoffs, no weather or time limits will be in effect. All games must be played to their logical conclusion.*

LIGHTNING: The official IFPAA rule on lightning is: If an umpire or manager sees *any lightning* (bolt or flash) at *any distance*, play must be immediately stopped and all players must leave the field. Play may only resume after fifteen consecutive minutes free from lightning. The umpire will keep the official time.

WARM-UP TIMES: For first games of the day, the visiting team will have the field 30 to 15 minutes prior to game time, and the home team gets it from 15 minutes until game time. The team not on the field will have priority in the batting cage. For all other games, 5 minutes will be allowed per team, time permitting. If time is short, managers will split available pre-game time for warm-ups.

BATTING: With a coach or child pitching, each batter will bat until they hit the ball or strike out. Pitches will be called by the Umpire. A strikeout is 4 strikes, swinging or called (fouls count up to 3). Although there are no walks, players are encouraged to learn the strike zone as balls will be called. The strike zone is defined as the area over the plate between the shoulders and knees. This should be interpreted liberally, with the benefit of the doubt going to the pitcher. If the pitch is "hittable", it should be called a strike. While all umpires will differ slightly, an effort must be made to remain consistent during each game for both teams. Full swings must be taken at all times, as there is NO bunting.

BATTING ORDER: The full lineup always bats. If a team bats out of order, and it is noticed during the inning, the team will re-bat from the point of the last "legal" batter, with the game situation duplicated from that point. If it is not noticed at that point, the game will proceed with the original lineup from the last batter in the inning. No out is recorded for batting out of order.



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BAT THROWING: A batter may not throw the bat. If this occurs, play is ruled dead and the offending **PLAYER** is warned. All runners return to the base held at the time of the pitch. The pitch at the time of the violation is not counted and the batter resumes their at bat. If the same batter throws the bat again during the game, the batter will be called out and runners return to their bases.

BATTER'S BOX: A form will be available at the field to outline the batter's box. Players must stay within the box or a replay will be called immediately. This discipline also helps kids be aware of the strike zone.

BASERUNNING: With no leads or stealing, the runner must wait until the batter makes contact with the ball. Once the ball is in play, the runner can advance until play is stopped, at which point, each runner is awarded the base he is entitled by the halfway line (lead runners take precedence over trailing runners). The base runner should stay within the baseline. The only exceptions to this are to avoid a batted ball or interference. The runner has the right of way at all times, except when a fielder is making a play. If a runner interferes with a fielder while playing the ball, the runner is out and play is stopped. If a runner runs out of the baseline to avoid a tag, he is out. If a batted ball hits the runner *before* it reaches an infielder, he is out and play may continue. There are still halfway lines in use between bases for determining which base a runner is awarded when play is stopped. Tagging up is allowed on any caught fly ball. Runners will be awarded an extra base when the ball goes out of bounds (past the 10 foot arc surrounding first and third). Exception: *no runner may score from third on an overthrow out of play.* Other throws are still in play and runners may continue. Base coaches may not physically interfere with any runner.

FIELDING: Once the ball is put into play it is LIVE! Play will continue with all runners and fielders active until (a) all runners have voluntarily stopped or been held on their respective bases; (b) the ball is in possession of a fielder in the infield (dirt area) and the fielder has indicated time and the umpire has called time, at which point play is dead and the halfway line rules apply; or (c) the ball goes out of play on an overthrow (past the 10 foot arc surrounding first and third) and each runner is awarded the appropriate base. At this age, we want to teach the kids to throw to the appropriate base and not automatically back to the pitcher.

The Catcher will play behind Home Plate in the normal position. If a Catcher has some difficulty moving around and retrieving wild pitches, the Umpire can assist throwing the ball back to the Pitcher. The Catcher will wear a cup AT ALL TIMES.

The Pitcher will play at 5 feet behind and to the side of a Coach Pitcher. When a player is pitching, they will pitch from the normal 40 foot pitcher's line.

Infielders will play in the traditional positions. This is a large area and gives the manager some flexibility in placing players. The only restriction here is that the infielder not set up in the baseline so the runner initially has a clear shot to the next base.

The outfield consists of four fielders, and can be adjusted by the manager. These players are under no restrictions as far as fielding balls or making throws. At this age, it is time to teach the kids the finer points of calling for the ball, hitting the cutoff man, and backing up plays. Although able to assist in the



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infield, they are *never* permitted to physically make a putout on a runner; this must be done by an infielder. This is done to prevent players from playing a short outfield position and trying to act as a fifth infielder. For this reason the outfielders must start each play 30 feet behind the baselines between 1st and 2nd or 2nd and 3rd. Since the ball is live, outfielders must get the ball back to the infield to make a play at a base or hold the runners.

PITCHING: This is the year the children begin pitching. While many if not most of the kids are not physically ready to do this on a regular basis, it is a good idea to begin the transition in that direction, after all, nine-year olds will be pitching from the start of the season next year. The transition plan that the league will utilize is the most logical, productive and enjoyable way to introduce the kids to pitching, yet is flexible enough to be adjusted to suit their abilities. The season will be divided into three phases. For approximately the first third of the season for each team, coaches will pitch the entire game. For the middle third, kids will pitch one inning only. For the remainder of the season, kids will pitch two innings. These limits can be adjusted upwards or downwards by the commissioner depending on the skill levels and success of the kids learning how to pitch. All other rules will stay the same. For the playoffs and All-Star games, coaches will pitch the entire game.

When kids are pitching, the following additional rules apply:

- The pitching line is 40 feet from Home Plate. The Pitcher must throw from the line or behind it, but he does not have to toe the rubber or anything that precise.
- There is a five ball (called) limit per batter. After the fifth ball is thrown, a coach from the batting team will complete pitching to the batter, which will speed up potentially slow situations. If this happens three times in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed.
- A batter hit by the child pitcher will take first base. If this happens twice in the same game, the pitcher must be removed.
- A child is permitted to pitch one inning per week. Managers are responsible for enforcing this rule themselves. An exception may be made if, due to removal of pitchers for hit batsmen or pitch limits, a team in the manager's judgment has no willing and qualified pitchers who have not already pitched that week.

UMPIRING: With the calling of pitches and faster play, the Umpire takes on a greater role in the game, and must command greater respect than "just one of the parents helping out". With that in mind, the home team for each game will furnish the Home Plate Umpire. The visiting team will provide the Infield Umpire. Neither of these Umpires may double as coaches during the game. There should never be a disagreement with the Umpire, his word stands. If there is legitimate confusion over a play with everyone concerned, including the Umpire, it should be discussed briefly and nicely between the Umpire and the managers. Please refrain from rudeness or profanities in front of the kids. We do not want to set such examples for the kids. **BE REASONABLE.** The Umpire should wear the equipment provided for protection. (The kids are getting older, and sadly, so are the adults.)