



## IFPAA League Rules (Lil' Tykes - 4-year olds)



### Lil' Tykes Baseball - 4-year olds

**GENERAL:** This is the first league in what will hopefully be a long and rewarding involvement with organized sports for each of these children. The goal for this league is to introduce the youngsters to the most basic concepts of baseball, doing so in a low-stress atmosphere conducive to learning while downplaying the most competitive aspects of the sport. Special rules have been designed which allow for all of the basic skills (i.e., hitting, catching, throwing and running) to be utilized under real-game situations, but including provisions which guarantee equal playing time for everyone, provide experience by continuously putting the ball in play and reward the kids for trying their best by minimizing the risks and penalties possible on any play.

**FIELD:** The field dimensions for T-Ball consist of bases 50 feet apart, a foul arc 15 feet in front of home plate, a pitcher's line 45 feet from home, and halfway lines between the bases. The home team is responsible for preparing the field for each game. This includes setting the bases and tee, lining and raking the field, doing any general tidying up the field needs and making all decisions on field conditions due to the weather.

**EQUIPMENT:** We will use the A1117 T-Ball, a softer, safer ball designed for small children. Uniform shirts and hats are provided by the league, with the kids able to keep both. Standard all-black pants must be provided by the parents. Bats, bases and tees are kept in the equipment boxes at the fields. Balls will be provided to the managers by the league. The kids must bring their own gloves. Baseball shoes are not mandatory, but recommended. **METAL SPIKES ARE NOT PERMITTED.** The kids may bring their own bats and batting helmets if they wish. All batting helmets are **REQUIRED** to have a facemask (faceguard). Batting helmets with facemasks (faceguards) will be provided in all equipment boxes at the field. No player will be allowed to bat without wearing a batting helmet with a facemask (faceguard). All equipment should be prominently marked as equipment has a tendency to get misplaced at this age.

**PLAYERS:** There will be 6 infielders: First Base, Second Base, Shortstop, Third Base, Pitcher, and a Rover, who plays directly behind second base. There will be no outfielders. If a team has seven players, there will be two infield Rovers.

**GAME:** The games will be four innings in duration. Each inning will end after all of the players have batted regardless of how many outs have been made. Games should run no longer than an hour and a half. All games will be scheduled in two hour blocks to allow for 15 minutes of warm-up at the start and a 15 minute grace period at the end. **NO** game can run into the next time period, and any game reaching that point must be stopped immediately. Scores and standings are not kept and incomplete games are not made up. Rained out games are rescheduled with the agreement of both managers.

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



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**BATTING:** All players will hit off a batting tee. If the managers agree, during the second half of the season, the players will have the opportunity to hit pitched balls. With the batting team's coach pitching, each batter will have the opportunity to swing at up to five (5) pitches, with NO strikeouts. If the ball has not been put into play after five (5) pitches, the batter will hit from the tee until a playable ball is hit. In addition to the standard foul lines, any ball not hit past the 15 foot foul arc will be ruled foul. Any time the batter loudly strikes the tee, the play will be ruled dead, and the swing will be played over. Full swings must be taken at all times, as there is no bunting.

**BATTING ORDER:** The full lineup always bats every inning. The last player to bat in the preceding inning will be the first player to bat in the following inning. This will give every player the opportunity to run the bases.

**BASERUNNING:** With no leads or stealing, the runner must wait until the batter makes contact with the ball. Once the ball is in play, runners can advance until play is stopped, at which point, runners are awarded the base they are 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 and interference. To encourage infield throws, runners will NOT be awarded an extra base when the ball goes out of bounds. Runners may advance only one base on hits.

**FIELDING:** At the start of each play, the infielders must be in the traditional defensive positions, between the infield and outfield lines and the pitcher must be stationary behind the pitcher's line. After a fair ball is hit, play continues until: an infielder throws the ball in a forward motion toward home plate, an infielder holds the ball after a throw to him or her, the ball is overthrown on the infield, or the umpire stops play to prevent an unsafe situation. We strongly stress that the players should defend the area around their own position and not try to play the whole field. Players should throw the ball when trying to make a play at a base if there is a fielder at that position. Fielders not in the act of fielding cannot obstruct base runners. There is no infield fly rule. During the first half of the season, if an out is made, the runner can remain at the base. During the second half of the season, if an out is made, the runner will be instructed to return to the bench.

**COACHES:** The league can use as many parents as possible to help at this age level. When a team is in the field (defensively) four (4) coaches can be positioned in the field. When a team is batting, one (1) coach will be stationed near home plate to assist the batters with the tee. The other two (2) coaches will serve as base coaches.

**UMPIRING:** The managers will serve as the umpires to ensure a safe environment. The batting team's manager will be required make sure the fielding team is ready and announce that the ball is going to be placed on the tee prior to placing the ball on the tee. No disagreements with umpire decisions are permitted. Managers, coaches and parents should strive at all times to set an excellent on-field example for the kids.