



IFPAA League Rules (T-Ball – 4, 5 and 6-year olds)



T-Ball Baseball – 4, 5 and 6-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 A117T 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. Batting helmets with facemasks 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. 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. The outfield will consist of all the remaining players available, as all children are guaranteed equal playing time.

A related matter is the rotation of players to different positions. Each child must play in the infield for a minimum of two innings up to a maximum of three. No child may play more than one (1) inning per game at pitcher or first base or more than two innings at any of the other infield positions.

GAME: The games will be four innings in duration. Each inning will end after three outs or five runs have scored. After the fifth run, play is stopped, regardless of what continues on the play. Each team will bat through their lineup during the 4th inning or what is determined as the last inning by both managers. *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.



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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. Play may only resume after fifteen consecutive minutes free from lightning. The umpire will keep the official time.

BATTING: During the first half of the season, all players will hit off a batting tee. During the second half of the season, all 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. If a team bats out of order, and it is noticed during the inning, the team will 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.

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. If the batter throws the bat again during the **SAME** at bat, the batter will be called out.

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. The runner has the right of way, except when the 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 runner is hit with a batted ball, play continues, the runner will not be declared out and fielders may attempt a put-out. The runner may round first base to the right or left providing there is no deliberate move toward second. To encourage infield throws, runners will NOT be awarded an extra base when the ball goes out of bounds. During the first half of the season, runners may advance only one base on infield hits. During the second half of the season, batters may advance to second base (doubles) on a batted ball. Base coaches may not physically interfere with any runner.

FIELDING: At the start of each play, the infielders must be in the traditional defensive positions, between the infield and outfield lines, outfielders must be evenly spaced behind the outfield line and the pitcher must be stationary behind the pitcher's line. After a fair ball is hit, play continues until: an outfielder or 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. At this point, the halfway lines are used. 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. **NOTE:** *If it appears that a team has a set play to continuously run the ball to a base rather than risk a throw, then the umpire will warn the manager and all subsequent runners will be ruled safe.*



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Fielders not in the act of fielding cannot obstruct base runners - bases "lost" will be awarded by the umpire. There is no infield fly rule. If a throw crosses home plate anywhere inside the batting cage prior to a runner attempting to score touching home, the runner will be ruled out. Traditional outs may also be made by any infielder at home. Umpires or coaches in the field of play may not interfere with the ball in play, other than the umpire returning the ball to the pitcher. The outfield consists of all players remaining after the 6 player infield is established. No outfielder can make a play at a base. As soon as the outfielder throws the ball in a forward motion toward home plate or to a base, play is stopped. The only out an outfielder can record is by catching a fly ball.

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 (during the first half of the season). During the second half of the season, one (1) coach will serve as pitcher to the team when batting. The other two (2) coaches will serve as base coaches.

UMPIRING: The batting team for each game is required to provide the catcher/home plate umpire. Before each batter steps in and before each tee placement, the umpire will check on fielder awareness and say "Play Ball". The umpire will call "Time" when appropriate to the game situation, stop play immediately when a bat is thrown or loudly hits the tee, remove the tee and bat immediately after the batter leaves the home, serve as catcher, but not interfere with a ball in play, and enforce safe practices on the field of play. No disagreements with the decisions of the umpire are permitted. Managers, coaches and parents should strive at all times to set an excellent on-field example for the kids.