



IFPAA League Rules

(Slow Pitch – T-Ball 5-6)
MAR 2005



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The goals of T-Ball Softball are to keep the players safe, develop their skills, and have fun. Sportsmanship and team play are emphasized, as opposed to winning and losing. These rules are defined in the spirit of these goals. The players will learn sportsmanship by the examples set by the Managers and parents.

RULE I – PLAYERS

- A. A team consists of the full roster of players whose positions are designated as follows: pitcher, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, rover, and the balance of the roster in the outfield. The rover is positioned in front of second base. The umpire serves as the catcher.
- B. Players are not permitted to play the same position more than two innings per game. Each child must play at least 2 inning in the infield except in the case where the manager and parent agree that the child would be at undue risk of injury playing the infield. Each child must play at least 1 inning in the outfield. Equal infield/outfield playing time is encouraged.
- C. Each player must bat in turn. Latecomers will be added to the end of the batting order. A girl who becomes injured or ill or who otherwise leaves during a game may be removed from the lineup with no penalty to her team. If that girl recovers or otherwise returns during the game, she shall return to the lineup in her former position. Opposing team is to be notified of latecomers, removals, and returns to the lineup.
- D. A team must be able to field at least seven players. Managers may by mutual agreement postpone a game (for reasons other than weather) no later than twenty-four hours before the scheduled start of the game. Managers are encouraged to work together to get the games played as scheduled. "Sharing" or "loaning" players in order to play the game is acceptable.

RULE II – PLAYING FIELD

- A. The distance between bases is fifty (50) feet. All bases must be anchored.
- B. A pitching line will be marked thirty (30) feet from the point of home plate. The adult pitcher may adjust this distance as seen fit for the ability of the batter, but the T-Ball pitcher may stand no closer to home plate than pitching line.
- C. Hash marks will be placed halfway between all bases except for home to first.
- D. A line will be marked ten (10) feet behind the bases to define the line for the outfielders to start play as indicated in Rule VIII below.



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- E. Foul lines will be marked along first and third base. Foul lines run from the tip of home along the back of first and third.
- F. An arc with a radius of 15' from the tip of home plate will be marked between the foul lines in front of home plate.

RULE III – GAME LENGTH

- A. A regular game is four innings unless shortened because of time, darkness, or weather.
- B. An inning is over when three outs are recorded, or the batting team scores five runs, with the exception of the 4th inning which is limited to 3 outs or one time through the batting order.
- C. At the first appearance of lightning, the game will be stopped. Players must move a safe distance from the playing field, preferably into a vehicle or building. The game may continue if no lightning is sighted for ten minutes.
- D. The time limit for the games is two hours whenever another game is scheduled at the same field following the current game. Make every effort to complete all four FULL innings regardless of score.
- E. Scorebooks are kept for game tracking purposes only. Game score and wins and losses are not emphasized.

RULE IV – PITCHING

- A. Managers or coaches pitch to their own team. No pitching arc is required, but pitchers must pitch the ball in a correct slow pitch manner. Pitchers may adjust distance and pitch to the ability of the batter.
- B. The pitcher may deliver a maximum of five (5) pitches to each batter. If the ball is not hit into fair territory after 5 pitches, the batting "T" will be used.

RULE V – BATTING

- A. The batter must wear a helmet whenever the batter is swinging a bat. This includes warming up.
- B. Only the batter on deck is permitted to swing a bat to warm up, and the batter on deck may do so only in the warm-up cage.
- C. The scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the batting order correct, the on-deck batter in the warm-up cage, and the safety of the warm-up cage.



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D. The batter is allowed five pitches to put the ball in play. If the ball is not hit into fair territory beyond the 15- arc, the "T" will be placed on home plate. The home plate umpire then places the ball on the "T" and calls "play ball", at which time the batter may hit the ball. The batter continues to bat until the ball is hit into fair territory beyond the 15' arc in front of home plate. If a batter hits a ball into foul territory (either a pitched ball or from the "T") that is caught in the air for an out, an out will be recorded, and the at-bat is over.

E. A batter may not hit a fair ball with the bat a second time. The ball will be called dead, and the at-bat will continue as in "D" above.

F. The first time a batter throws a bat, the batter is warned. That batter will be called out on subsequent thrown bats. The scorekeepers must keep track of warnings.

RULE VI – BASERUNNING

A. A baserunner is entitled to continue to advance on a batted ball until the ball becomes dead. The ball is dead when:

1. A thrown ball crosses a foul line. The baserunner advances only to the base to which she was heading (at risk of being put out) if the baserunner has crossed the hash mark prior to the ball crossing the foul line. If the baserunner has not crossed the hash mark, the runner must return to the previous base unless the runner is forced to the next base.

2. A ball is thrown from the outfield.

a). If a baserunner has crossed the hash mark, the runner may proceed to the next base at risk of being put out. The ball is live only for the purpose of determining the safe/out disposition of the runner.

b). If the baserunner has not crossed the hash mark when the ball becomes dead, the runner must return to the previous base.

3. A throw is made to a base where an out can be recorded. Runners may advance only if past the hash mark. (e.g. a throw is made to second base to attempt a put out on a baserunner advancing from first to second. That throw is not caught. The baserunner may not advance to third, and all other baserunners may advance only if past the hash mark).

4. Once an infielder has control of the ball and holds the ball, play must stop, and unforced runners can advance only if they have passed the hash mark. Should that infielder make a throw, rule 3 above applies.



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- B. The baserunner is out if the baserunner leaves the base path to avoid a tag. The baserunner is out if the baserunner interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play. Baserunners should be taught to run behind the fielders. A fielder may not block the basepath or otherwise obstruct the runner.
- C. If a baserunner, while not on a base, is struck by a batted ball that infielders (other than the pitcher) have not had an opportunity to field, the baserunner is called out, and the ball is dead. If the ball is touched by any fielder prior to striking the runner, the runner is not out, and the ball is in play.
- D. A baserunner may “tag-up” and advance to the next base after a catch has been made for a putout in the outfield. The baserunner must contact the base after the catch has been made prior to advancing. The baserunner must reach the hash mark prior to the ball breaking the plane of the infield in order to advance. This encourages the outfielder to throw the ball quickly to the infield.
- E. If a baserunner leaves the base before the ball is hit, the baserunner will be given a warning, returned to the base from which she started, and will not be called out.
- F. Base stealing is not permitted.
- G. Sliding is permitted only in a feet-first manner. Instruction of proper sliding technique, and purpose is encouraged.

RULE VII – FIELDING

- A. The fielding team should be encouraged to throw the ball to the proper base, and proper coverage of bases should be emphasized. The rules on running are intended to encourage proper infield play, and not penalize fielders for attempting to make the proper play.
- B. An out is recorded if a fielder catches a batted ball in the air, catches a throw at a base before a forced base runner reaches the base, tags a runner that is not on a base, or as otherwise indicated in these rules.
- C. In the case of plays at home plate, if a good throw is made to home prior to the runner reaching home, the runner is ruled out whether or not the catcher/umpire catches the ball. This will apply to both forced and non-forced outs. A “good throw” is defined as within the batter’s boxes at a reasonable height. This can be a difficult decision for the umpire, and the judgment of the umpire is final, and will not be questioned.
- D. The outfielders must be situated in fair territory at least ten feet beyond the normal base lines. Outfielders cannot make a putout by tagging a base or a runner. The intention of this rule is to encourage proper coverage of bases, and to teach the outfielders to throw the ball to an infielder. (An outfielder may assist a putout by throwing the ball to an infielder.)



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- E. The infielders should be situated in the designated positions, and must avoid remaining in the direct baseline between the bases when the ball is put in play. Should an infielder obstruct a runner, the runner may be awarded the next base at the determination of the umpire.
- F. The pitcher must throw a ball which she has fielded to a teammate in order to record an out. The pitcher may not tag a runner to record an out, nor beat the runner to a base with a fielded ball to record an out. The pitcher may record an out at a base, or tag a runner out if the pitcher has received a throw while covering a base.
- G. In the event a batted ball hits the adult pitcher, the ball is in play. In the event that the adult pitcher interferes with the child pitcher's efforts to field a batted ball, the ball will be treated as a dead ball, runners will return to their base, and the batter will get a new pitch or attempt from the "T" (that pitch will not count against the batter's 5 pitches).
- H. The infield fly rule is not in effect.

RULE VII – EQUIPMENT

- A. Players must wear the shirt issued by IFPAA.
- B. Players must wear black uniform pants. Shorts are permitted, but must be black athletic shorts.
- C. Players may wear shoes with rubber spikes. Metal spikes of any type are not permitted.
- D. Batters, base runners, and batters on deck are required to wear helmets at all times. If a base runner removes her helmet while on the field of play, she shall be warned to keep her helmet on.
- E. Players may not wear jewelry. Earrings that cannot be taken out (i.e. newly pierced ears) must be covered with a bandage or tape.

RULE IX – MANAGERS

- A. The manager is responsible for team conduct during the time his/her team is at field site. The team manager will carry on any communications with the umpire.
- B. The home team manager must provide one new game ball for each game. Only balls issued by IFPAA are permitted.
- C. The home team manager is responsible for distributing the helmets and bats.. The home team manager is responsible for returning the equipment to the proper boxes after the game. **Helmets will be placed in their own box separate from the box with the field supplies (bases, field white, field dry).**



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- D. Both the home and away team managers are responsible for preparing the field. This includes setting and lining the bases, dragging the infield, remove standing water (never remove standing water from the infield by sweeping it into the outfield), treat damp areas (spread field dry, allow it to work, and rake it in), and repair holes. Again, do not remove standing water from the infield by sweeping it into the outfield. **Field equipment shall be kept in a separate box from the helmets.**
- E. The home team manager provides the home plate umpire who will also serve as the catcher. If both managers agree, the umpire/catcher may be provided by the batting team. The home plate umpire is responsible for safe/out calls at third, and home. The home plate umpire is responsible to stop play and control the advancement of runners in accordance with Rule VI.
- F. The away team manager provides the field umpire. The field umpire is responsible for safe/out calls at first and second base, putouts on fly balls, and assisting the home plate umpire in determining positions of runners for advancement in accordance with Rule VI.
- G. Umpires must be at least sixteen (16) years old, and understand the rules of the game. There will be no arguments with the umpire. If there is a question on interpretation of the rules, both managers will refer to the rules, discuss the issue, and settle the issue amicably.
- H. The home team will occupy the bench on the first base side of the field. The away team will occupy the bench on the third base side of the field.
- I. The home team may use the infield from 15 minutes prior to the game until game time. The away team may use the infield prior to the home team. The managers are responsible for starting the games on time.
- J. Each manager will provide a scorekeeper to record runs and outs, maintain the proper batting order, and have players ready to bat when their turn comes up.
- K. It is the home team manager's responsibility to contact the away manager to cancel game due to weather. The home team manager should visit the field to determine if the field is in playable condition, and may confer, if necessary, with the visiting manager to make a mutual decision. The home manager must contact the commissioner to reschedule a canceled game, and coordinate the rescheduled date and time with the away manager.

Approved by IFPAA Board, March 2005