

## **Bloordale Baseball League - Rookie Ball Division Rules 2009**

Rookie Ball is an important stage in the transition to full-scale baseball. The Rules for playing Rookie Ball in the Bloordale House League shall be the rules of the Ontario Baseball Association, except as where amended by the BBL.

In applying the rules, both the normal rules and our variations, we must remember that these are 8 and 9 year-old children who in most part are unaware of or just beginning to learn the rules. Some discretion is given to the umpire in terms of assessing intention, and then ruling accordingly. Coaches should meet before each game to clarify rules and assignments.

### **1. Umpires**

- The umpire is always provided by the batting team. This SHOULD be the coach running the pitching machine (please make sure they know the rules), however, another coach may be appointed as umpire. If another coach is umpire this information must be relayed to the opposing team prior to the start of the inning
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches are responsible for call ball fair or foul down the lines. They need to call BOTH fair and foul balls (loud and clear).
- The umpire can overrule or make the call in the absence of or a delay in making the correct call.

### **2. Batting**

- Batters are allowed 5 good pitches in which to hit a ball into fair territory. A pitch considered by the umpire to be strike yet not swung at by the batter is considered one of the five good pitches. Likewise, a bad pitch (not considered a strike) that is swung at is also considered one of the 5 good pitches. A bad pitch not swung at is not to be counted as one of the five good pitches. A batter is out if he hits a foul ball on the fifth good pitch.
- On a pitch considered to be strike yet not swung at by the batter, the umpire must call "Pitch" (loud and clear).
- On a pitch not considered a strike, the umpire must call "No Pitch" (loud and clear).
- The coach running the pitching machine must call (loud and clear) "Last Pitch!" on the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch.
- If a player unintentionally hits any component of the pitching equipment, that player is awarded first base. Base runners only advance if they are forced.
- If a player appears to intentionally be aiming for the pitching machine, for the purposes of being awarded first base, the pitch will be called dead.
- If a player hits the umpire, it is considered a dead ball and the pitch is thrown again.

- A hit ball that comes to rest in the pitching circle without first coming in contact with a defensive player is immediately called a dead ball. That player is awarded first base. Base runners only advance if they are forced.
- A hit ball that passes through the pitching circle is considered live.
- Teams can adjust the pitching machine any time during the inning. It is at the discretion of the batting team.
- The first instance of a thrown bat will result in a team warning being declared to both scorers. For a team having been so warned, a second and subsequent instance of a thrown bat will result in the offending batter(s) being called out. Runners cannot advance on a play where the batter is called out as a result of a thrown bat.
- Bunting is not permitted. Balls that are poorly hit as a result of a full swing/not a bunting motion are in play.

### **3 Base Running**

- Base runners are not to knock down or run over a defensive player who may be interfering with the runner's progress and will be called out for doing so. Conversely defensive players without the ball (even if they are waiting for the throw) are NOT allowed to block the base paths or bases. Runners will be called safe if such obstruction occurs.
- Runners own the base paths; however, defensive players have the right to make a play on the ball. If a base runner is obstructed by a defensive player not directly involved in the play (i.e. not waiting for the ball or without the ball) either on a base path or at a base, the runner is 1) not considered out if the obstruction impeded the runner's progress and b) is awarded the base he was progressing to plus one base.
- A runner cannot leave the path he is taking to the next base to avoid being tagged out. Judgment should be exercised in determining whether the runner would have definitely been out if he had not moved to avoid the tag. A general rule of thumb is 3 feet to either side of the path being taken.
- Sliding is permitted.
- Players are not allowed to lead-off. This should be called immediately by the umpires or base coaches before the pitch is thrown. No warning is given for this infraction if caught prior to the pitch.
- The first instance of a lead-off (where the ball is put into play) will result in a team warning being declared to both scorers. For a team having been so warned, a second and subsequent instance of a lead-off will result in the offending runner(s) called out.
- Runners cannot advance on a play where the runner is either a) given a warning about a leadoff or b) called out as a result of a lead-off. The ball is considered dead and pitch is thrown again.

- A runner having gained first base cannot be tagged out for over-running the base unless he/she commits to advancing towards second base. Even if the runner turns inward in returning to first base, he cannot be tagged out unless he then commits to advancing to second base.
- The ball must be in the hand (or glove) that is making the tag.

#### **4. Stopping the Play**

- A 16' circle must be drawn around the pitching machine/rubber. This is baseball so the lines of the circle are "in bounds"
- Time is called by the umpire in the following situations
  - The ball is thrown and the pitcher catches the ball within the 16' circle (both feet on the line or inside the circle)
  - The ball is thrown toward the pitcher and the ball bounces or rolls into the 16' circle (it can subsequently bounce or roll out). Time is called immediately when the ball touches the ground within the circle.
  - The ball is thrown and the pitcher catches or picks up the ball and runs it back into the 16' circle
  - The ball is thrown outside the 16' circle, but the pitcher who has both feet on the line or within the 16' circle catches the ball.
  - When the ball is at rest and neither the offensive or defensive team make any attempt to advance or throw the ball.
- Once time is called, any runner ½ way to the base, is given that base. Any runner less than ½ way, must go back to the previous base.
- In the case that one runner is sent back (not ½ way) and another is sent forward (more than ½ way) end up on the same base the runner being sent back take precedence – resulting in the other runner being sent back as well.
- If the ball comes in contact with any piece of equipment or the umpire during play (other than a hit ball) the umpire must call time and all runners get the base to which they were proceeding.

#### **5. Mercy Rule / Last Batter**

- A half inning is concluded the sooner of three outs or when 10 batters in the line-up have batted once. Before the last batter not to have hit comes up to bat, the batting team must call "Last Batter".
- The umpire must call time and the half-inning ended if either of the following occurs:
  - The ball having been hit into play is thrown, handed to or otherwise given to the catcher who subsequently touches/steps on home base. If the defensive team is not using a catcher, then only the pitcher can make this play. Any runs that score before time is called will count.
  - The defensive team make a third out (second and third out or first, second and third out) by normal baseball rules. Run scoring will be determined by normal baseball rules. No runs count if the third out is the result of a force play or failure to tag up on a pop fly.

- The batting rules always apply even during last batter. So if a player strikes out, hits the pitching machine, hits the equipment or umpire, etc. this can end the inning with less than 3 outs.
- The mercy rule is in effect for every inning but the last inning. The last inning this is either the seventh inning, or sooner if the time is being approached, will require 3 outs for each side.

## **6. Defaulted Games**

- A game will be considered a default for one or both teams not having seven players fifteen minutes after the published start time. There are no exceptions.

## **7. Player Rotations**

- All players will be equally rotated through every position during the year.
- A maximum of 10 players are allowed on the field. Group A includes pitcher, first base, second base, third base and short stop. Group B includes catcher, left field, left-centre field, right field and right-centre field. A player can play no more than 50% of his/her time in Group A or B positions and he/she cannot play more than two innings in any infield position.
- If a team has more than 10 players, Group C is formed. This Group must sit on the bench. There must be an even rotation for all players through Group A, Group B and Group C, as required by the number of players present.
- If a team has only nine players, then they must use only three outfielders and a catcher.
- If a team has only eight players, then they can drop the catcher and have home plate covered by the pitcher including 'last batter' situations.

## **8. Pitcher's Circle**

- A circle of 4' feet in radius must be clearly defined around the pitching machine.
- Defensive players cannot enter into the circle to play a ball.
- If a defensive player enters the circle to play a ball the umpire must immediately call time and all runners are awarded one base.
- A hit ball passing through the circle is in play.
- When a ball comes to rest in the pitcher's circle after having been touched by the defensive team, the umpire must immediately call time and the runners will be awarded the base to which they are proceeding.

## **9. Ball Out of Play**

- When a ball leaves the field of play (ie. goes beyond the end of the screen along first or third base or through the doorways near home plate), the umpire will call time and all runners will be awarded the base they are going to plus one.

## **10. Coaches Positioning**

- Defensive coaches cannot be in the field of play and it would be beneficial if they stayed behind and beyond the screen on the first and third base lines.
- Offensive coaches must come no closer than one foot to the first and third base lines and cannot touch, grab or physically control a runner.

## **11. Foul Balls**

- The first and third base coaches will call both fair and foul balls on their respective side (loud and clear)
- Between home and first or third base, a hit ball entering foul territory is not considered foul until it is touched by a defensive player in foul territory, comes to a full stop in foul territory, hits the screen or a coach. If the ball in this area rolls from foul territory into fair territory before first or third base and before being touched, it is considered fair and in play.
- Beyond first and third base, a ball landing in foul territory is foul and ball landing fair and rolling into foul territory is fair.

## **12. Protests**

- It is important to make calls that are fair, consistent and the result of good judgment.
- Coaches are encouraged to discuss quietly and respectfully and hopefully resolve any call that is in dispute.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, the game should be finished and a protest must be submitted to the convenor within 24 hours.

## **13. Player Positioning**

- The pitcher can be no closer to home plate than the pitcher's rubber.
- Infielders other than the pitcher must be behind the base line when the ball is being pitched.
- Outfielders can be no closer to home plate than the edge of the grass when the ball is being pitched.

## **14. Game Timing**

- Games are to be 2 hours in length.
- Teams cannot begin an inning after 1:40
- Coaches should meet prior to 1:40 to determine the number of innings they can reasonably expect to complete leaving one full inning to play (the last inning) in which the mercy rule will not apply The last inning must be an inning without the

mercy rule being in effect. Each team must make three outs (unless the home team is winning after the top half of the inning).

#### **15. Players Hit by the Ball**

- A runner who allows a hit ball to come in contact with him/her while not on a base is out.
- Once a hit ball has been fielded, and the contact with the ball is incidental, the ball remains in play, the runner continues to advance and all other baseball rules continue to apply.
- A runner injured by a thrown ball will get the base to which he was advancing.
- A runner going out of his way/moving off the base path to invite contact with the ball will be called out.

#### **16. Scoring**

- If a third out in a half inning is the result of a force play or failure to tag up after a caught fly ball any runs that score during that play do not count.
- If a third out is not the result of a force play then only the runners who touch home plate before the third out is made are counted. Runners have to touch home plate.

#### **17. Results**

- The winning team must notify the convenor within 48hrs of the game. Failure to do so will result in the losing team winning by forfeit 7-0.
- Convenor: Michael Giorno 416-723-6031 [mgiorno@symaptico.ca](mailto:mgiorno@symaptico.ca)