

St. Bonaventure Baseball League

Rookie Ball Rules – 2011



Summary of Rules:

The normal rules of baseball apply with the following adaptations:

- Regulation game is 6 innings, game is official after 3 innings
- Batting team pitches to itself
- Maximum 5 pitches per batter
- Innings end after 3 outs or after 7 batters have come to bat
- Up to 11 players can play in the field (maximum 6 infielders)
- Players cannot play same position > 2 innings and cannot play 2 in a row in at 1B or P
- No lead-offs and no stealing bases

Game Length/Weather

Regulation Games are 6 innings. A game becomes official after 3 innings. Games start at 6:30 PM sharp. Teams shall play until darkness or conditions render playing impractical at the discretion of the umpire. If an inning cannot be completed the score reverts back to the score at the end of the prior inning.

In regular season the coaches and umpire must agree on which inning is the final inning before the inning starts and both teams must get a chance at bat to complete the inning.

At the beginning of the game the coaches shall determine after what time no new inning shall begin with the default time being 8:00 PM in case no agreement is made. (Later times apply mostly for games later in the season when days are longer.)

In the Field

Up to eleven (11) players may be positioned in the field at a time as follows:

- Pitcher (positioned next to the other team's pitcher/coach)
- Catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, shortstop, 3rd base, and up to five (5) outfielders.

No more than six (6) players may be positioned in the infield, including the catcher. Outfielders may not encroach onto the infield gravel until a ball is struck.

Players may not play more than two (2) innings in the same infield position in a game and may never play two (2) innings in a row at Pitcher or First Base. All players must have equal time on the playing field to the extent possible.

If a team has over eleven (11) players on its roster, the additional fielders must take turns on the bench. All players should be rotated on a fair and regular basis. A coach may elect to play fewer than 11 players in the field in an inning.

When a hitter is at the plate the fielding pitcher must remain close to the pitcher's rubber until the ball is struck (to simulate the positioning of a pitcher in baseball who has just thrown a pitch). The umpire shall determine whether the pitcher is positioned fairly.

The pitcher/coach for the other team is a not fielder and should move off the field of play or crouch down out of the way after a ball is struck by the batter to avoid interfering in the play.

If a fielder *intentionally* impedes the progress of a base runner, the base runner will be awarded the next base. It is not interference if the fielder is in the act of fielding a ball, in such a case the base runner must avoid the fielder or the runner will be called out for interference.

First Base – The Safe-T Base

The 1st baseman may only make an out by touching the white part of the double-sized “Safe-T Base”. If the 1st baseman touches the orange side of the “Safe-T Base” or blocks the base runner’s path, the runner shall be called safe. The base runner is permitted to touch the white part of the base when advancing to, or considering advancing to, second base on an extra-base hit or if there is no play being made at first base by the fielding team.

If a runner has run through first base touching the orange portion and wishes to advance (e.g. on an overthrow that remains in play) the runner must touch the white part of the Safe-T base before continuing on to second base.

Overthrows – Ball in Play

If the ball is overthrown at any base or home plate, and the ball ends up **out of the field of play** then the play is dead and all runners advance one base only. The ball is considered “out of the field play” when it is outside of the dugout fences or the backstop behind home plate. An overthrown ball that hits the dugout fences and is playable by a fielder is considered in play.

If the ball is overthrown and **does not go out of the field of play** (as defined above) the ball remains in play and the base runners may advance at their own risk.

Batting

The “5 Pitch” Rule: The goal of the league is to have the players put the ball in play in every at bat and accordingly each batter may receive up to a maximum of five (5) pitches.

Hittable Pitches: A 5th pitch that is entirely missed by a player will result in a strikeout. The umpire may grant a player an extra pitch if, in the umpire’s discretion the batter did not receive **at least 3** hittable pitches.

No Foul Outs: A batter may only “foul out” on a 5th pitch if the foul ball is caught by a fielder, otherwise an extra pitch will be granted.

Ball Hits Pitcher/Coach: If a struck ball hits the pitcher/coach the ball is dead, and the pitch does not count unless the coach made no effort to avoid the ball.

Seven Batter Limit: The hitting team shall be limited to a maximum of seven (7) batters. The hitting team must announce the **Seventh Batter** before puts a pitch in play. If the Seventh Batter puts the ball in play but the batting team failed to announce the Seventh Batter, the hit shall not count and the batter shall hit again and the pitch will count as one of the batters 5 pitches. If the pitch hit by the unannounced batter was the 5th pitch the batter will be out and the inning will be over.

10 Foot Line: All hits must cross the 10 Foot Line or they will be ruled as foul balls. The line is a drawn or imaginary (umpires discretion) semi-circle approximately ten (10) feet in front of home plate and extending from the 1st base to 3rd base foul lines. (See Diagram)

On Deck: All players other than the player on deck must remain in the dugout while waiting to bat. A warning will be issued with an automatic out to follow for a second offence. The on-deck hitter must warm up at the end of the dugout and not interfere with the play.

Thrown Bats: Batters who throw their bats are given one warning and will be called out if they throw it subsequently.

Stealing and Leadoffs: Base stealing and leadoffs are not allowed (players cannot leave the base until the ball is struck). Sliding is allowed but only feet first. No metal cleats are allowed in this league.

Leaving Too Early Results in an Out if it happens when a Batter hits the Ball

In the event that a base runner leaves a base before the ball is struck the base runner shall be called out. However, the hit will be considered in play and all other base runners may advance at their own risk. Any force plays that are available to retire base runners who are on bases ahead of the disqualified base runner will continue to apply.

Bats

Baseball or T-Ball bats are permitted in Rookie Ball. Softball bats are not allowed .

Playing Rules

When Does An Inning End?

An inning shall end when either three (3) outs have been recorded by the fielding team or seven (7) batters have hit in the inning, whichever occurs first.

When Does the Play Stop?

Play in the field comes to an end in the following circumstances:

1. **All Base Runners are Out:** if all batters and base runners are retired; **OR**
2. **Ball in the Pitcher's Control on the Mound:** When the pitcher has control of the ball on the mound the play is over. However, any base runners who began advancing to the next base before the ball was caught by the pitcher may continue to advance at their own risk. The pitcher may elect to allow the runners to take the extra base where the play will end or to attempt to throw or tag them out, in which case play will continue; **OR**
3. **Infield Control & Time Out Called:** When an infielder has control of the ball and the runners have settled on a base and are no longer advancing, a player or coach may call Time-Out and the ball may be thrown to the pitcher with no further advancement allowed.
4. **Seventh Batter:** For the *Seventh Batter* the play will end when the **catcher** touches home plate and is in possession of the ball. The Seventh Batter may also be retired on the bases but any other runners may continue to advance until they are retired or the catcher touches home plate while possessing the ball.

Home Plate – When is a Base Runner Safe or Out?

Once a runner has advanced more than 2/3 of the way to home plate from 3rd base, they cannot turn back and they are considered a "Committed Runner". A runner who is not passed the 2/3 threshold can attempt to return to 3rd base.

To record an out, the catcher must touch home plate with control of the ball or tag the base runner prior to a Committed Runner crossing the Safe Line. (see).

To avoid collisions at home plate the runner need not touch home plate. The runner must cross a line to the right of home plate that extends from the corner of the batter's box to the backstop screen (**the "Safe Line"**). A player may touch home plate provided that they do not interfere with the catcher playing the ball. The *Safe Line* is to be drawn so that the runner has actually travelled the same distance as they would have had to in order to touch home plate.

Ground Rules

Outfield Bushes

A ball that clears the bushes in the outfield on the fly without touching them is a Home Run.

If a struck ball hits the bushes, either on the fly or after having hit the ground, and settles either in the bushes or over the bushes a ground rule double is granted and all base runners may only advance two bases from where they started.

If the ball strikes the bushes but remains in fair territory and is playable by the outfielder without interference from the bushes it is in play and the runners may advance at their own risk.

Umpires

Umpires are part of the teaching process and may advise players on matters pertaining to rules and safety. Umpires may help batters get positioned in the batters box. Umpires may not advise on strategic or competitive aspects of the game and are to remain unbiased.

Umpires and the Umpire-in-Chief can ask parents to refrain from negative cheering during and after a game. Umpires and Umpire-in-Chief can remove a parent from the game if they yell at the umpire, players or other parents.

Umpires can not be related to a player or coach playing in a game which they are umpiring. The Umpire-in-Chief can make an exception to this rule.

The umpire's decision is final. Coaches who wish to discuss a rule interpretation with an umpire must do so in the presence of the other team's head coach in a calm manner and shall not intimidate or show up the umpire in any way. PARENTS MAY NOT DISCUSS UMPIRE DECISIONS WITH THE UMPIRE.

Coaches

Coaches are not allowed on the field during play, except when pitching. Coaches may assist players in the batters box but must return to the dugout area before a ball is pitched.

Only one coach is allowed to stand in front of the dugout for the fielding team. One other coach may be positioned against the fence in the opening to the dugout and all others must remain inside the dugout.

Coaches are to assist the umpire in ensuring appropriate behaviour from parents on their team. Parents are not allowed to negative cheer or yell at players on their team or the opposing team or at the umpire.

The batting team may have one coach in each of the 1st and 3rd base coaching boxes.

Coaches are responsible for keeping the dugout areas that are in the field of play free of players, parents and equipment such as bats, balls and bags. Parents who are not coaching must remain behind the fences.

The Home Team is responsible for:

- Bringing out the equipment
- Bringing out the first aid box
- Put the equipment and first aid box back in the equipment room
- Sending the score to the league convener.

Both teams should keep score of the game and compare results after each inning.

Parents

St Bonaventure Baseball League will not tolerate any negative cheering or unsportsmanlike behaviour from parents. Only positive cheering is permitted.

Parents are not to yell at the umpire at any time. If they are unhappy with a call they are to speak to their coach who will then address the umpire if needed. **PARENTS MAY NOT DISCUSS UMPIRE DECISIONS WITH THE UMPIRE.**

Parents are not to yell or speak rudely to any player on their team or on the opposing team.

Any parent who does not comply with these rules can be asked to leave the game immediately.

Parents are not allowed on the field at any time during the game and must remain behind the fence and/or benches at all times.

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