

GVAA Baseball Kindergarten League Rules

SUMMARY:

- o Everyone should be getting plenty of playing time, with players rotating positions on a fairly regular basis. Under no circumstances should a player sit for a second inning before every player has sat for one inning. If you see a team putting the same players in the same positions or, it is your responsibility to make the Division Commissioner aware of the situation.
- o Rule D1: 7 pitch limit per batter rule is in place for the whole season, to try and keep the game moving. Coach your players to swing the bat.
- o View the Catcher as a “real position” where players are involved in every pitch of the game. Placing a player there who is not paying attention is very dangerous.
- o Rule D7: “The Halfway Rule” Finish the play to completion and then send the runners back. This lets the defense and offense learn how to make plays. Runners never stop halfway in “real baseball”
- o Rule E: The maximum number of players that bat each inning is equal to the number of players on the team with the most players playing that day... if Team A has 12 players show up and Team B has 11, then both teams bat a maximum of 12 players an inning. The inning comes to an end if Team A bats

all 12 players or if Team B bats all 11 players and the leadoff player twice, even if the 6 run limit wasn't reached or there aren't 3 outs yet.

- o Rule E: There is a 12 run mercy rule after four innings. If time permits, continue playing if the coaches agree to play (stop keeping score at that point, and work on seeing players at new positions)

- o Rule H: Coach your defensive players to get off of a base if there is no play and the runner is coming through. We shouldn't be calling obstruction, but coaches must help in teaching what to do on this.

- o Rule H: Baserunners hit with a batted ball: For this division, the baserunner hit is automatically out even if the defensive player had a chance to make a play on the ball. Batter awarded first, other runners move up if forced (a run can never score when this happens)

- o Safety first: Only one player on deck with a bat (Rule I)

Kindergarten League Rules

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GVAA Baseball Kindergarten League Rules

A. Official Rules

Instructional games are played under Official Baseball Rules as amended by Babe Ruth Cal Ripken League rules and further amended to emphasize fundamental defensive play, with special limitations placed on offensive activities such as base running. Bases will be set at 45 feet. Outs and runs will count but no standings will be kept.

B. Use of Players / Substitutions

1. Each player must play a minimum of four (4) innings in the field during a six-inning game. Unlimited defensive substitution is to be used and is critical to compliance with the minimum play provision. No player shall sit for a second inning before all players have sat for one inning. For games in which teams do not complete six innings in the field, coaches should still make every effort to have each player play three innings in the field.
2. Players are to be rotated through all positions with no player continually playing the same position. All players should play at least 2 innings in the infield. If the coach feels that a player is at a safety risk while playing in the infield he should use his discretion.
3. A continuous batting order is to be used, whereby all team players bat consistent with the lineups exchanged immediately before each game. Any player that arrives late for a game shall be placed at the end of the batting order. In instances where a player is either injured or too ill to continue playing during the game, that player's turn can be skipped without penalty. The continuous batting order does not change throughout the game and is therefore independent of the defensive changes made.

C. Positions in the Field

Teams will have 10 players in the field: Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Infielders, and 4 Outfielders. Outfielders must play at least 6 feet beyond the perimeter of the infield. An extra infielder is not permitted. "Pitchers" are positioned for defensive purposes only and should line up on either side of the pitching coach, while not being in front of or too close to the batter. Catchers should be in full equipment and positioned in proximity to home plate. Do not have your catcher sit at the backstop, not paying attention.

D. Batting and Baserunning

1. Batters have 7 pitches to put the ball in play. If the batter fails to hit the ball, a tee is brought out. The batter has 3 swings at the tee before he is sent back to the bench. Typically, pitches that the batter does not swing at are disregarded; as a result, there are no bases on balls (walks) or called strikes. In situations where a batter appears to be looking at several good pitches (at least three) that might otherwise be called strikes under official baseball rules, the coaches should encourage the batter to swing at the next good pitch and any thereafter.
2. The Instructional Division will use a pitch limit of 7 – meaning that the at bat will be ended on the 7th pitch (exception: foul balls continue the at bat). This is intended to maintain the flow of the game, and is NOT to be used as a way for a coach to avoid encouraging the batter to swing at the ball. It is far preferable to try and encourage the players to swing than it is to begin calling out players for not swinging.
3. In this Division, a team's turn at bat will end upon the first of the following to occur: 6 runs scored in that inning, or batting through the maximum number of players in that inning, or three outs being made. Exception: if the 6th run is scored as a result of a home run hit over the fence, all runs shall count on that play.

4. Bunting is not permitted in this Division.

5. Stealing and taking leads are not permitted in this Division.

6. Batters hit by a pitch do not receive a free pass to first base, and should remain batting. If injury makes it impractical to continue the at bat, move on to the next batter in the order without penalty.

7. A batted ball that strikes any part of the pitching coach will be considered a fair ball regardless of where the ball goes after contact with the pitching coach. Infielders should field the ball as any other batted ball.

8. On plays where the ball never leaves the infield, runner advancement is limited to one base from where the runners were when the play began, unless the throw goes out of play (throws that go over the fence, or into a dugout will result in all runners being advanced one additional base).

9. On balls hit into play into the outfield, a baserunner cannot advance any further than where he is at the moment the retrieved, incoming ball breaks the dirt plane of the infield. This plane extends past the foul lines to the fence. At that point, the play should continue through to its natural completion, however, runners that were not halfway to the next base at the time the ball returned to the infield will be sent back to the previous base.

For example, a runner is past the halfway point on his way to third base when the ball thrown by an outfielder passes into the infield. The runner can try to continue to third base and will be allowed to stay there if he makes it to the base without being put out. He is not automatically safe at third just because he was already past the halfway point.

Similarly, a runner that is less than halfway to third base when the incoming ball enters the infield is not automatically entitled to a free pass to return to second base. The play should continue through to its natural completion. If the runner is tagged while retreating back to second base, he is considered out. If the runner continued to run to third base during the same play and is thrown out, the out stands as well. He is sent back to second after the play if he makes it to third before being put out, or if play has been halted as a result of an attempted out at another base.

Finishing the plays through to natural completion promotes intelligent base running and defensive work consistent with older levels of baseball, while mitigating the risks associated with overthrows. Judgment regarding whether a runner has passed the halfway point is the responsibility of the coaches of both teams. It can be difficult to simultaneously note (among other things) when the ball passes into the infield, where each runner is located, and whether runners are touching the bases.

It is recommended that the fielding team position a coach in the field who watches any ball to the outfield being thrown back in. As the ball crosses the dirt plane this coach should throw his hands in the air and yell "Ball's in!" At this time the coaches should note the location of each baserunner to determine if they are halfway. If the game has an umpire(s), then the judgement is solely the responsibility of the umpire and is not to be questioned. If an umpire asks a coach from either side for some assistance in determining any of these items, please be truthful knowing that you too could be faced with the same difficult situation.

It is recommended that the halfway hashmarks between the bases be marked with a short chalk line (not more than a few feet in length) when the fields are lined. This will help in determining if runners are halfway.

8. There is no additional advancement on any errant throw (originating from either infield or outfield) that goes past any base, unless the throw goes out of play (all runners are then advanced one additional base). For example, there's a base hit to the outfield, and runner is attempting to go from first to third. Outfielder's throw goes past the third baseman, however, the runner cannot advance to home and all other runners are to return to the base they were entitled to at the time the ball broke through the grass /dirt infield plane.

E. Game Completion and Mercy Rule

A regular game consists of six (6) innings, with the game becoming official after completion of four (4) innings. (3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead after the top of the third inning).

When weather (rain, lightning, darkness) prevents the completion of at least six innings, games shall generally revert back to the last completed inning for determination of final score. At that point, tie games (during the regular season only) that have completed four innings of play should officially be declared a tie and not resumed.

*****Additionally, no new inning (top half) shall begin for any regular season game after the game has reached the 1 hour, 45 minute mark.*****

At that point, the current inning (top and bottom) is to be completed and the game declared official (even with a tie score). In the event that inning still cannot be completed due to darkness or weather, the entire partial inning is generally declared void and the game reverts back to the last completed inning for the purposes of determining final score.

Mercy rules:

Games shall be called when either team leads by twelve (12) or more runs at the conclusion of the fourth or fifth inning, or earlier upon the agreement of both head coaches. At that point, play can continue for developmental purposes upon mutual agreement by the coaches.

F. Pitching

Coach Pitching will be used for all games. A coach from the batting team will pitch overhand from the mound which is set at 30 Feet away from home plate.

G. Not Enough Players

A team can begin a game with as few as 7 of their official team players present. If additional players arrive after the start of the game, they should be entered at the end of the batting order. A team with less than 9 players may “borrow” players in each inning to round out its’ lineup. Any borrowed player will be determined by the “lending” team’s coach, however, the player should be instructed to play to the best of his abilities, and should play catcher or outfield only.

For the regular season, the games are to be played and scored no matter how many players end up showing up for the team that doesn’t have enough players. **Since we don’t keep standings there is no reason to have a team forfeit.** For the playoffs, if the team does not have its own 8th player show up by the end of the second inning, the game can be declared a forfeit but still played through to a reasonable end for the players’ developmental purposes.

H. Infield Fly Rule

This Division does not use the Infield Fly Rule. It is not reasonable to assume that players at this age will catch any ball, let alone have the intent and skill to let a ball drop for the purpose of tricking a baserunner into a double play.

I. Obstruction and Interference

Defensive players without the ball are to yield the base to oncoming runners and should not stand in the runner’s base path while not making a play. This is very common and result in player collisions.

Obstruction (failure to yield to the runner a base, or base path if the fielder does not have the ball or is not attempting to make a play) should result in a verbal warning being issued to the defensive player.

Coaches from both teams should closely monitor this and instruct players to move out of the way if there is no play to be made. Pay close attention to where position players are standing during the at bat that they are not standing in the base path. If during the playoffs there are umpires present, then repeated instances of obstruction could result in the umpire essentially placing the runners where he thought they would have advanced if the obstruction had not occurred. In doing so, the umpire is of the judgment that the player's progress was so severely impeded that he would have otherwise advanced to the base with ease were it not for the obstruction.

If a baserunner makes no attempt to avoid a fielder in the base path pursuing a ball and makes contact that prevents the defensive fielder from making a play, interference should be called by the coaches and the baserunner is called out. The coaches should use their judgment on where to place the runners based on where they were at the time of the interference, not necessarily where he thinks they would have ended up had the interference not occurred. (The defense gets the benefit of the doubt here, for an infraction on the offensive team).

Also, baserunners that are struck by a batted ball in fair territory are declared out and the play is immediately dead even if an infield player could make a play on the ball. The batter goes to first base and all other runners remain where they were before the play, unless forced to advance. A runner cannot score from third when this happens. For example: bases loaded, runner from second gets hit by ground ball between second and third. That runner is out, the batter goes to first, the runner on first is forced to second, and the runner that began the play on third remains there, as the runner being put out between second and third removes the force for the runner on third.

J. Contact Rule and Head-first Sliding

If in the umpire's judgment a runner attempting to reach any base intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player, he/she will be called out on the play. The runner must slide or otherwise attempt to avoid contact.

Head-first sliding is not allowed. Exception is when a player is diving back to a base from a somewhat stationary position, while not trying to advance to the next base. Baserunners attempting a head-first slide while advancing to the next base will be automatically called out in all instances, and will be ejected from play for a second infraction in any single game.

K. Field Preparation and Reconditioning, Warm-up's

Both teams are responsible for preparing the field before the game. This includes the batter's box, pitching area, bases, foul lines, halfway marks and anything else that needs to be addressed. Fields should be properly raked and lined prior to the start of every game. When it starts to get hotter it is also a good idea to water the field periodically. This all helps in keeping our fields in the best condition possible and giving the players the best playing experience possible. General team warmup's are not to be conducted on the infield. Instead, the outfield area is to be used provided that field preparation is being adequately addressed.

Both teams are also responsible for cleaning up the field after games as well. Fields should be left in a condition that makes them ready for another game's use. Additionally, filling in holes around home plate and the base areas will increase the likelihood that the field is still playable the next day if there is rain overnight.

Before leaving the dugout area, coaches and team members are responsible for picking up any trash and scanning the area for any items that might otherwise be left behind.

L. Dugout Behavior

Cheering for teammates is encouraged and a great way to keep players' minds on the game at hand. However, it is requested that loud, team rally chants and songs be discouraged. Hitting the fence with bats or rattling the fence is not permitted at any time. Only one player is permitted in the on-deck area. All other players are to remain in the dugout.

M. Coaches' Roles and Umpires

Early in the season, the defensive team can position two coaches in the outfield to provide verbal assistance to players during the game. This should be discontinued at the midway point of the season and the defensive coaches should then remain in the dugout during each inning. It is also helpful to have a coach or adult volunteer stand behind the team's catcher, to provide help with the catcher's positioning and to also help speed along the game by making the throws back to the pitcher.

The coach pitcher from the batting team will also serve as Umpire for all plays on the field if no umpire is assigned to work the game.

The umpire has complete charge of the game and has final say on all matters. Coaches and parents are expected to be supportive of the umpire's efforts and maintain the flow of the game in the interest of quality play.

N. Rescheduling Rainouts and Other Stopped Games

The League Commissioner has the responsibility of deciding whether to begin games. Once games are started, any decision to stop a game is the result of consultation between the coaches.

Rained out games are to be replayed in their entirety, unless the rained out game has been declared official or the coaches of both teams agree to resume an otherwise unofficial game that had begun before being rained out.

All makeup games will be played in the next available opening in the league schedule. The League Commissioner is responsible for scheduling and will confirm arrangements with the coaches and have the final decision regarding the rescheduling.