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## 2025 – 9U Rules – Muskoka Hornets Baseball

**Mission Statement:** To facilitate a league that is FUN for all participants yet still provides an atmosphere where players can learn the skills necessary to progress and improve as a ball player.

1. PLEASE remember that the league is designed to provide a fair and safe place for all participants. This must be the primary goal.
2. While this program is house league and based on equal playing time and skill development\*, it is important to remember that in life there are winners and losers and parents and kids both need to learn this lesson.
3. If after a few weeks of games, you notice an imbalance in terms of team skills, then there may be the need to move a couple players around to improve competitive balance. Please keep me posted where you think changes might be necessary.

We propose the following rules be followed for the 2025 season.

### 1. **Batting:**

- Regular Season - teams bat through the entire line up in the first inning. Any subsequent inning will be played with three outs to a maximum of once through the order.

Note: If one team has more players ie 8 vs 7, then the other team with 7 players bats an extra. A different repeat player MUST be chosen each inning when this occurs.

- Each batter will be allowed **five** “hittable” pitches.
- The umpire has the discretion to award an extra pitch for any ball judged to be not in the strike zone, unless the batter swings at the pitch. A “ticked” fifth pitch or subsequent pitch will be awarded another pitch.
- For the regular season, if a hitter is unable to put a ball in play after 5 pitches from the machine, then the ball will be placed on a tee.

The goal is to: Put balls in play and give kids the full baseball experience of running the bases and fielding balls. (In the first few weeks of the season, if a player is scared of the pitching machine, then it is ok to bypass the machine and go directly to coach soft toss).

- Any batted ball that hits the pitching machine, umpire or pitcher will be dead. The batter will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base, all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced to advance. When the ball is dead, a player must return to their respective base, without penalty. The fielder responsible for balls hit to the area around the pitching machine MUST wear a caged helmet. (Supplied to each team).
- Bunting is NOT permitted.
- No infield fly rule!



## 2. Base Running & Fielding

- Bases are set at 60 feet and pitching machine at 44 feet
- Leading off is not permitted.
- If the ball is hit into the outfield and subsequently returned to the infield by standing on one of the bases or by an infielder standing in the infield, then all runners must stop and go to the nearest base. This will be an automatic “time-out”. Runners are not allowed to advance on any overthrow.
- Dropped last strike - does not apply in that most times there is not a catcher on the field. If a catcher is in place behind the batter, then he or she must wear a catcher's equipment including mask.
- Teams can use a fourth outfielder (10 players on the field).

## 3. Score Keeping

- For recording purposes, the maximum run differential will be 7 (if score is 20-5 – will be recorded as 12-5).

## 4. Game Time and Weather Delays

9U game time is 1h30min. Games will start promptly at 5:30pm or 7:00pm.

- For 5:30pm games- no new innings beginning after 1h:15min of play (6:45pm), the current inning will finish, and the game will end. At 7:00pm the ball will be dead, and the game will be over.
- For 7:00pm games- no new innings beginning after 1h:15min of play (8:15pm), the current inning will finish, and the game will end. At 8:30pm the ball will be dead, and the game will be over.

Weather delays will not extend beyond a 1/2-hour delay. For example, if a 7:00pm game is delayed 36 minutes they will be permitted to run overtime 30 minutes, losing 6 minutes of game play. (Ball dead at 9:00pm)

\*All players should have the opportunity to develop in positions of interest. It is recommended players use practice time to improve their skills. Players will be given an opportunity to play these positions in a game scenario as their skills improve and where they can safely do so. This is at the discretion of their coach.

**Note – rules subject to change at the discretion of the convener.**