



Minors - A

Coaching Guide

Updated: Feb 2021





HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF DAA

Doylestown Athletic Association (DAA) has been organizing youth sports programs in our community since 1968 with the help of its sponsors and volunteer coaches, umpires and officials. The total enrollment in all of DAA's sports programs is more than 3,000 boys and girls; and this number has been growing by nearly 10% per year. Only 54% of DAA's membership comes from Doylestown Borough or Township. The rest of DAA's players and volunteers comes from communities throughout central Bucks County.

Currently, DAA's programs consist of boys' & girls' basketball (winter), boys' baseball and T-ball (spring), girls' softball (spring/summer), girls' field hockey (fall) and boys' and girls co-ed volleyball (fall, winter skills & drills and spring). Most of these programs are played at the recreational level; but DAA also features travel teams in boys' baseball and basketball, as well as girls' softball.

All sports are open to children ages 7 through 18 (and even younger in some sports); although each sport's leagues are restricted to players in specified age groups and/or school grade levels. DAA provides an equal opportunity for its members to enjoy sports participation in an environment that encourages, promotes and develops sportsmanship, citizenship and a sense of teamwork and pride in oneself. All players enrolled in the recreational programs will play at least a minimum period of time in each game, regardless of talent or experience. Financial assistance is provided when necessary to any player with a desire to participate. Please see individual sport director for a confidential discussion. All coaches, assistant coaches and board members must pass a confidential background check administered by an independent investigative agency.

For more information on DAA Baseball, our web site <http://daasports.org/boys-baseball-home/> provides a good overview of Junior and Senior leagues, travel, registration and scheduling information.



DAA Code of Conduct

AS A PLAYER, I promise to always play with good sportsmanship and respect for my teammates and opponents. I will be courteous to all coaches, officials and other parent volunteers who are trying to help me become a better player. I will do my best in all practices and games, have patience with myself and remember that I am playing these games for fun. I will attend every practice and game I can, knowing that my team will depend on me to be there. I will play hard at every position that my coaches assign to me.

AS A PARENT, I promise to encourage good sportsmanship by showing support for all players, coaches and officials at every game. I will focus upon my child's efforts and performance rather than the overall outcome of the game. I will never ridicule or yell at any child, including my own, for making a mistake or losing a game. I will never use profanity or physically or verbally abuse any players, coaches, officials or spectators. I will participate in positive cheers that encourage all players and discourage any cheers that redirect that focus, including those that taunt and intimidate officials or opposing players and fans.

I will help my child enjoy the experience of playing on a team by doing whatever I can, including being a respectful fan and providing whatever help is needed by the team or league according to my skills and availability.

I will endeavor to learn, understand and respect the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions. I will remember that the coaches and league officers are all volunteers. I will not be critical unless I'm ready and willing to make the necessary effort to correct the object of my criticism; and I will bring any perceived problems to the attention of my child's coach IN PRIVATE.

I will bring my child to practices and games on time and, if I do not stay, will make sure that my child is picked up promptly afterward. I will also give advance notice to my child's coach whenever my child will be absent from a practice or game. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all DAA-sponsored events.



AS A COACH, I will honor all of the above promises that generally apply to parents; and I will never forget the trust that parents place in me while coaching their children. I will do my best to develop the talents of every player on my team, to treat them with respect and fairness and to help the entire team learn the principles of sportsmanship. I will also honor the principles below:

1. I will support the vision of DAA – provide an opportunity for youth to play organized sports.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win
3. I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
4. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
5. I will promise to treat all injuries, minor and major, as serious and to take prompt action.
6. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
7. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players. By this I will set an example for the parents to conduct themselves in the same manner.
8. I will provide a sports environment for my team, in conjunction with league policies, that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
9. I will be knowledgeable in the rules of baseball, as established by the league, and I will teach these rules to my players and parents.
10. I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
11. I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and NOT adults.



Coaching Responsibilities

Enjoyment

This should be obvious – but coaches should remember they have the most impact on determining if a player has a positive experience throughout the season – and wants to return the next season. Plan your practices to keep all kids active (in smaller groups if needed). Motivate and teach with a positive attitude! Remember -- the tone you set as a coach will really impact the experience of all the kids.

Education

The following pages of this guide provide a few tips for teaching proper baseball techniques. Our goal should be ensuring each boy learns some fundamental skills appropriate to his age group. Coaches should also search for advice on details for which they may not be experts. Improving our own coaching acumen should be a goal of each of us each season!

Field Care

Before each game (HOME team is responsible)

- Show up 45 minutes before any game. Field prep will take 15 minutes, and we want to allow time for infield practices to start 30 minutes prior to game time.
- The coaches may need to make a game-time call on a rainout (see below too). If there is standing water on much of the infield that cannot be removed by raking or 1-2 bags of STAY DRY, the game may need to be cancelled. Never use more than 2 bags of STAY DRY, and never use for practices (just games).
- If the field is not in proper condition from previous usage, contact the league director. We need to follow up on coaches not doing proper after-game/practice cleanup.
- Line the fields using the bags of lime in the field bin. If you need to replace lime from the shed, use the golf cart and re-supply with several bags for the coming weeks.

After each game or practice (AWAY team is responsible if game)

- **Home Plate Area / Batters Boxes:** Hand rake these areas back to level. If you can get the cart to drag or sweep that area great, but be sure not to run over home plate. Keep in mind that with the rakes we're trying to smooth out the field, not dig up the dirt.
- **Pitchers Mound:** Hand rake areas back to level - especially focusing on the landing areas and the shelf in front of the pitchers rubber. Smooth out the mound.
- **Base Paths:** Hand rake up and down along the path. Do not rake across the path as it encourages dirt to build up on the edges. Some base paths might be wide enough to have the cart drag; however, be sure to stay 6 inches away from the grass to prevent lips from building up. Again, we're trying to smooth out the field with the rake, not dig up the dirt.
- **Infield Area:** Use the carts to drag or sweep the infield areas. Be sure to stay 6 inches away from the grass to prevent lips from building up. We will have (maybe not today, but soon) infield drag mats that can be used to hand drag at Turk 5 and 6 and at Maplewood 1 and 2.
- **Trash:** Dispose of trash in and around the field and bench areas



Safety

Pitch Counts – See “League Rules” below (section 4d)

Child Abuse Clearance

Effective 8/1/2015, Pennsylvania has a new background check policy in place. All volunteer coaches must have been cleared through the DAA background Check process, summarized at <http://daasports.org/background-check>

Accidents / injuries

Each coach has received registration information for each player that includes emergency contacts and other relevant medical info (eg, allergies) pertinent in case an ambulance needs to be called. Make sure you have the spreadsheet with all that information available at any game or practice.

If a player is injured to the extent an insurance claim might want to later be made, the coach must report the event to the league director. DAA carries insurance for such cases, but the insurance claim can be at risk if the event is not reported promptly.

Rain Outs

All coaches MUST sign up for text alerts of field closings and game cancellations. Simply text DOYLESTOWNBASEBALL to 84483 to receive alerts from DAA Baseball.

Rain-out Policy (also posted at <http://daasports.org/boys-baseball-home/schedules>):

- Both Coaches have to agree that the field is unplayable. If there is a disagreement, the Home Team's Coach or a Paid League Umpire (Majors, AAA, & AA) makes the final call.
- If it is questionable prior to game time, have the players go to the field and decide at the game site. Weather can be isolated, so please check your field before making your final decision. Rain-outs will not be rescheduled.
- If there is inclement weather in the area for most of the day, please check the DAA website (either Home or Schedules pages) to inquire if the fields are open or closed. When there is severe weather, DAA Baseball may close all the fields.
- IF there is time, an email will be sent out stating that the fields are closed.
- Majors, AAA, & AA Managers: As soon as you cancel your game, contact Susan Schwartz (267-337-1210) so she can inform the umpires that the game is canceled.
- If a game is in progress and a clap of thunder is heard in the area, please clear the field and take shelter immediately. The game will be suspended until 30 minutes have passed since the last clap of thunder was heard. If the game continues after a weather delay and is stopped again due to more thunder and lightning in the area, the game is canceled.

Schedule updates

Your league director will convey schedule changes to you to share with your team. Also, the schedule is posted on our web site at <http://daasports.org/boys-baseball-home/schedules/>



Some Notes for Coach-Parent Meeting

1. Introductions
 - a. introduce all coaches
 - b. all players introduce themselves
2. Philosophy
 - a. enjoyment, positive coaching, not win at all costs
 - b. education of the game / equal playtime for all
 - c. respect for coaches and each other
3. Information flow
 - a. Email – verify if any parent wants to keep their email private (BCC)
4. Rain out policy (parent may want to text DOYLESTOWNBASEBALL to 84483 to receive alerts)
5. Parents responsibilities
 - a. Code of Conduct
 - b. Zero Tolerance Policy
 - c. Proper practice equipment needed (long pants, hat, glove, no metal cleats)
 - d. Not baby sitter – parent or responsible adult should be present
 - e. Email the coach if will miss event
 - f. Arrive early for games as coach specifies
 - g. Younger leagues – snack policy (beware allergies if so)
6. Upcoming dates
 - a. Opening Day / Picture Day
 - b. Home Run Derby for age 7+



DAA Minors A – League Rules

Refer to the latest Cal Ripken Rule Book for all rules except the following:

1. Starting Times: Weeknights 6 p.m. If the opposing team does not show up a forfeit is declared at 6:15 p.m.

- a. Home team has the dug-out on the 1st base side.
- b. Home team supplies (2) game balls.
- c. Visiting team has infield practice first (5:30 – 5:40), followed by the home team (5:40 – 5:50).
- d. Home team uses the 5:50 to 6:00 time to line the field, set up the pitching machine and make sure all bases are securely in place.

2. Game Rules

- a. The game will last either 6 innings or 1 hour and 45 minutes – whichever is shorter.
- b. Teams can play with a minimum of 7 players.
- c. All players must wear the appropriate equipment at all times which includes: batting helmets while batting and in the “on-deck” circle; catchers gear and cup while catching; and baseball hat and glove while in the field on defense.
- d. The game score will be kept by a scorekeeper.
- e. Infield fly rule is NOT in effect
- f. Maximum runs per inning in all innings except the last inning is 5. However, if during a play the 5th run scores on a hit, runners continue to run until the play is over. Therefore, if you had bases loaded with 5 runs across that inning and the player hits a triple, all 3 runs would count. There is no maximum run limit during the last inning.
- g. Mercy rule is not in effect. Teams should continue to play regardless of the score.

3. Playing Time Equality

- a. All players must be placed in the batting order.
- b. Free substitution for all fielders.
- c. Rotating players is encouraged however use discretion for players at First and Pitching. Players should receive equal infield and outfield time.
- d. All players must play the field a minimum of 3 innings or one half of the game and not sit for two or more consecutive innings.

4. Pitching/Batting Rules – Kid Pitching

To encourage the development of kid pitching the following guidelines will apply:



- a. All games will be played with a kid pitcher. NO Machine Pitching will be used for games.
- b. A kid pitcher will be allowed to walk (1) batter per inning before being assisted by a Coach.
- c. The kid pitcher may pitch in front of the rubber. He should not be closer than 40' to home.
- d. During kid pitch, balls and strikes will be called. The Umpire (or Coach acting as an Umpire) will be the coach of the batting team. The strike zone will be larger than normal but not to encourage poor swinging decisions from the batter. The good rule of thumb is
 - i. a) Width = chalk line to chalk line of the batter's box.
 - ii. b) Height = Letters to the knees
- e. If the batter strikes out: The batter is out.
- f. If the batter is walked after the first walk: The coach pitcher (from the batting team) will pitch following the coach pitch rules below. The results of the play will count towards the inning. So, if the batter places a ball in play and the play results in an out, the play stands as an out.

5. Pitching/Batting Rules – Coach Pitching

- a. After a kid pitcher has walked 1 batter per inning there will be no more walks. A coach pitcher (from the batting team) will pitch from about 40' from home plate. The batter's strike count will be transferred to the coach pitcher.
- b. The kid pitcher should be positioned even with the rubber to assume the natural defensive location for a pitcher. He can be moved to right or left of the mound but not playing shallow shortstop or second base.
- c. Each batter will receive a maximum of 6 pitches. The batter will be called out if he does not swing on the 6th pitch. There are no walks with the Coach Pitcher.
- d. Swinging strikes count only (the Umpire will not call balls or strikes during Coach Pitching)
- e. No Bunting is permitted. If a batter shows or attempts a bunt he shall be called out and no runners may advance.
- f. Balls that hit the Coach Pitcher are considered in play.
- g. After 6 pitches, the batter is out.
- h. Once the batter puts a ball in play, the Kid Pitcher returns to pitch to the next batter.

An Example of Coach Assisted Pitching Play:

- The first batter of the inning is walked by the kid pitcher. The batter goes to first.
- The second batter swings and misses...strike 1. Then, he looks at a pitch that is called a strike by the umpire.....strike 2. Then the kid pitcher throws 4 consecutive balls. This batter does not walk.
- The Coach Pitcher (from the batting team) pitches to the batter. The kid pitcher assumes the natural defensive position for the



pitcher. The batter assumes a 1-1 count.

- The Kid Pitcher then returns to pitching to the third batter.
- The third batter swings twice....Strikes 1 and 2. He then does not swing on 4 called balls. The Coach pitcher returns to pitching. The kid pitcher goes to his defensive position. On the next pitch from the Coach pitcher, the batter assumes a 1-1 count.
- The Kid Pitcher then returns to pitching to the fourth batter.

6. Pitching Limits

- i) No kid pitcher may pitch more than 2 innings per game. Additionally, listed below is a chart showing pitch count limits and required rest recommendations to be followed:

League Age	Daily Max Pitches	Required Rest (Pitches Travel and In-House)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7 – 8	50	1 – 20	21 – 35	36 – 50	N/A	N/A
9 – 10	75	1 – 20	21 – 35	36 – 50	51 – 65	65 +
11- 12	85	1 – 20	21 – 35	36 – 50	51 – 65	65 +

Travel Pitchers may be further restricted and their use in in-house play must be coordinated with the Travel Coach(s).

7. Base Running Rules

- Leads and stealing are not permitted.
- Runners may not advance on over thrown balls.
- A base runner is out if, in the judgement of the umpire,:
 - The base runner does not slide or attempt to get around (i.e. avoid contact with) a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.
 - The base runner does not slide to avoid contact with a catcher if there is a play at home plate regardless of the catcher's possession of the ball. In other words if there is a play at home plate the base runner must slide.
- A catcher may not block the plate or be in the baseline (unless a thrown baseball leads them there) when they are not in possession of the baseball.

8. Sliding Rules

- You must slide feet first into every base including home plate. Headfirst slides are not permitted when the runner is making forward base progress. However, head first slides are permitted when the runner is attempting to return to a base.



9. Defensive Rules

- a. A Defensive Coach is permitted to be in the field of play, preferably in shallow right or left.
- b. Teams can field (4) Outfielders. Outfielders must start each play at a minimum of 15' behind the infield baseline.
- c. The play is dead when the ball is returned from the outfield and is "in control" within the infield. Control can be established by either an outfielder who runs into the infield or a throw to an infielder. The infielder must have both feet within the infield.
- d. An infielder who fields the ball and decides to make a play will be ruled as "releasing control" in order to make a play on a runner.
- e. It is the Umpire's discretion to rule when the play is dead.
- f. In the case of an overthrow during the course of a play: Runners may not advance
- g. Dropped 3rd strike: Batter is automatically out and can't run to 1st base.

10. Pace of Play

- a. Please make every effort to speed up the game. Ensure you have identified the catcher for the next inning and have a coach who is helping to get the gear on that player.
- b. If the catcher is on base with two outs, a pinch runner may be used. The pinch runner should be the player that made the last out.



Minors A – Coaching Objectives

1. Overall Coaching Objectives

- a) To provide everyone an equal opportunity to participate.
- b) To provide an environment that encourages, promotes, and develops sportsmanship, citizenship, and a sense of teamwork & pride in oneself.
- c) To use POSITIVE coaching techniques with your team:
- d) TEACH honor and respect for the Game.
- e) REWARD and REINFORCE effort. Not just winning.
- f) PROVIDE positive reinforcement and encouragement as your primary method of motivating your players. Give “Kid-Friendly Criticism” in private when you have the player’s attention and they can hear you. Avoid giving criticism in non-teachable moments and sandwich each criticism (one positive before and after each criticism). Keep those EMOTIONAL TANKS FULL!
- g) Remember to keep it fun so players will enjoy baseball and their DAA Sports experience.

2) Fielding Grounders

- a) Balanced “Ready” Positions / Hands out in front of body
- b) Receive “grounders” with two hands
- c) Exhibit “Sound” throwing skills
- d) Takes the ball from glove to power “t” positions smoothly. Turns body to target and throws to the target using good “foot work”.
- e) ELBOW is “high” and “away” from side of body
- f) SNAP and follow-through with the throw.

3) Catching Fly Balls

- a) Glove and hand in proper position to approach and CATCH the baseball using two hands. When the ball is above the fielders waste the fingers of the glove are up. When the ball is below the fielders waste the fingers of the glove are below the waste.
- b) Use sound foot work after catching the ball to get the body turned to the target.
- c) On long throws a player will use the crow-hop technique.

4) Hitting

- a) GRIP – Knocked Knuckles
- b) STANCE – Good Balance, knees slightly bent, legs are slightly wider than shoulders. Back Elbow is down and relaxed.
- c) LOAD – Push bat back evenly with both hands when the pitcher has



ball at top of power "t". Weight is now on the back leg.

- d) SLIDE – Shift weight to front side by sliding front foot slightly forward towards the pitcher.
- e) HIPS & HANDS – Release hips and hands. The Knob of bat should be pointing at the pitcher when the hands and hips release.
- f) IMPACT – Bottom arm is fully extended. Top arm is bent at the elbow.
- g) EXTENSION – Arms are fully extended and the bat is pointed to center field.
- h) FINISH – Follow-through!

5) Base Running

- a) TEACH basic mechanics of running (pumping, arms, leg drive, and eyes focused on the base instead of the ball.)
- b) Drop or lay the bat down when running to first base.
- c) RUNNING THROUGH first base
- d) ROUNDING second base and third base
- e) USE ARM to push-off the base to start crossover step to get a good start off the base
- f) SOLID BASE RUNNING Fundamentals by knowing situations (Fly Ball if caught or dropped / Open base / two outs).
- g) Good Listening Skills. Listens to base coaches' instructions

6) Basic Defensive Fundamentals

- a) Knowing situations when there is a runner at first
- b) Knowing situations when there is a runner at second
- c) Knowing situations when there is a runner at third
- d) Knowing Force Outs versus the need to tag a runner for an out.
- e) Knowing base and field responsibilities depending on ball location
- f) CUT-OFF and RELAY responsibilities. The Cut-Off Player should provide a two-hand target for the thrower. After the cut-off person catches the ball they should turn to their glove hand side to continue the relay.

7) Basic Catching Skills

- a) Balance Stance on feet.
- b) Make a Target for the pitcher over the plate in the batters strike zone.
- c) Keep your body in front of the pitch. Move the body to the ball not just the glove. Use the body to block the ball.
- d) Get rid of the helmet and mask to field pop-ups.
- e) Know when they have base responsibilities.
- f) Communicate to all the field players the number of outs in the current inning.

8) Basic Pitching Skills



- a) Teach a consistent take away.
- b) Work on good balance during wind-up and delivery
- c) High Elbow and keeping the arm in the proper slot when throwing.
- d) Emphasize using leg and hips when pitching
- e) Good footwork (Front leg - Up, Down and Out) When the front foot strikes the ground the front ankle should be pointing at the target. When the front foot is planted push-off the pitching plate with back leg. Use hips to assist arm in delivering the ball. When the hips open the front foot will turn and the toes will point to the target.
- f) Use the front arm for balance and to aim at the target
- g) Eyes on the target during the entire delivery.
- h) Use a four seam grip for control – two or three finger grips are ok at this age.
- i) Have the pitcher work from a comfortable and safe distance
- j) Have them try to move their body sideways down the hill.