

# INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION



## GOALS OF INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION

Good Sportsmanship  
Proper grip and throwing mechanics.  
Swing mechanics - Proper stance and grip.

To teach the following:  
Basic ball catching skills.  
Basic fielding mechanics.  
Where to run.

The different positions and bases.  
What are outs, hits, how to score a run.  
**Have FUN!**

## GENERAL RULES

### 1. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/GRADE

- 1.1. A player's grade is determined by the player's CURRENT grade upon registering.
- 1.2. For INSTRUCTIONAL, players are currently either in the Pre-K or Kindergarten upon registering.

### 2. TEAM ROSTERS, PLAYERS AND POSITIONS

- 2.1. Every player bats.
- 2.2. There are 8 defensive positions. 4 infield positions – P, 2B, SS, 3B. A coach or parent plays 1B. There are 4 Outfield positions.
- 2.3. Outfielders must be positioned in the grass at least 6 ft behind baselines.

### 3. PLAYING FIELD AND GROUND RULES

- 3.1. Bases: The infield shall be 50-foot square.
- 3.2. The ball is hit off a batting tee.
  - 3.2.1. In June, coaches may elect to pitch to batters.
  - 3.2.2. 3-pitch limit, then a tee is to be used.
- 3.3. There are no walk or strikeouts.
- 3.4. The ball must travel 10 feet, or it is a foul. Coaches may find it helpful to draw a 10' arc from home plate.
- 3.5. Draw a circle 8' to 10' in diameter to keep the pitcher honest.
- 3.6. Play is dead on balls coming in from the outfield when the ball reaches the baseline. Player does not have to have control of the ball.
- 3.7. Halfway rule again applies for balls coming in from the outfield.
- 3.8. No stealing. Player stays on the base until the ball is hit.
- 3.9. No defensive player shall play the same position for more than one (1) inning per game. All players must play at least one (1) inning in the infield per game.
- 3.10. Coaches must rotate players during the game so that all kids have equal time. Each kid should sit out 1 inning, and play 1 inning in the IF and 1 in the OF

### 4. GAME TIMES AND DURATION

- 4.1. All games are scheduled for either **three (3) innings** or **90-minutes** (whichever comes first).
- 4.2. All games will begin within ten (10) minutes of scheduled starting times unless waiting for completion of an earlier game or clearing of inclement weather.

### 5. INNING LENGTH | END OF GAME

- 5.1. An inning is over when **ALL** the players have batted once.
- 5.2. Each team will bat its batting order in full for their half-inning.
- 5.3. Starting in June - If a player makes an out, he/she will be removed from the base path and returned to the dugout.
  - 5.3.1. Outs will not be counted with respect to ending a team's at bat.
- 5.4. When the last batter comes to the plate, the offensive manager shall inform the defensive team, "last batter".
- 5.5. Encourage the last batter and all other runners to run around the bases. The defensive team should play the ball as usual for any potential outs. It is the defensive coaches' responsibility to control their players after the initial out attempt.

### 6. UNIFORMS | EQUIPMENT

- 6.1. Only UNIFORM requirement is a jersey and a hat.
- 6.2. Safety helmets must be worn when appropriate (hitting/running the bases).

- 6.3. Athletic footwear must be worn at all times.

## **7. BATTING**

- 7.1. Teams will bat all players on their roster in a predetermined order – the entire team bats each inning.
- 7.2. Changing the batting order from game to game is required. This will allow all players to have last batter “home runs”. An easy method for batting rotation is to order kids by their jersey number from low to high. That is their batting order. For each game you simply rotate the order forward one position so that the first batter now bats last in the next game. This allows all kids to hit from each position in the lineup – while getting the kids used to who they follow in the order.
- 7.3. The batter becomes a runner when he hits a fair ball.
- 7.4. Bunting is not permitted (the actual act of bunting is not permitted – hitting the ball a short distance with a full swing is not a bunt).

## **8. BASE RUNNING**

- 8.1. Leading off is not permitted.
- 8.2. Stealing is not permitted.
- 8.3. A runner may not leave a base until the batter has hit the ball.
- 8.4. Player needs to be at least halfway to the next base by the time a ball reaches the infield in order to get the extra base.
- 8.5. No extra bases on overthrows.
- 8.6. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
- 8.7. Sliding is permitted into all bases with the exception of 1B. Headfirst sliding is **NOT** permitted except when going back to a base (diving back) and coaches shall teach feet first sliding only. Players sliding feet first need not maintain contact with the base.

## **9. BASE | FIELD COACHES**

- 9.1. When your team is batting, you can have a 1st base coach, a 3rd base coach, and a coach at the batting tee.
- 9.2. When your team is in the field, you need to have a coach or adult parent playing 1B. They should not attempt to make an unassisted out on a ball hit to them. Encourage covering of 1B by P or 2B on balls hit to first. You can have as many other coaches out in the field as you wish as long as they don't get in the way.

## **10. UMPIRES | COACH UMPIRES (JUNE)**

- 10.1. No umpires are used for instructional.
- 10.2. Starting in June, as noted above regarding an out being recorded when hitting, the defensive team coaches will serve as base umpires and make calls regarding a player being safe or out at a base.

## **11. COACH, PLAYER AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT**

- 11.1. Head coaches must be at all times, examples of good sportsmanship.
- 11.2. The head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and assistant coaches.
- 11.3. Head coaches shall, to the best of their ability, control the conduct of parents and spectators on their side of the field, making every reasonable effort to discourage any type of harassment of umpires and opposing players, coaches, and fans.
- 11.4. No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or bat boy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere:
  - 11.4.1. Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators.
  - 11.4.2. Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, a coach, an umpire, or any spectator.
  - 11.4.3. Call "Time," or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk.
  - 11.4.4. Make intentional contact with any player, coach, umpire or spectator.
  - 11.4.5. Take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

**PENALTY:** The offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if a balk is made, it shall be nullified

- 11.5. No coach or staff member will appear at any game or practice under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance.
- 11.6. Smoking and/or the use of any and all tobacco products is prohibited on the playing field and in the bench area.
- 11.7. Coaches are not to leave the field or bench area for the purpose of smoking.

**PENALTY: IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM THE LEAGUE** for any coach, staff member and/or individual that violates Rules 11.4, 11.5, and/or 11.6.

- 11.8. All players must remain inside their respective dugouts unless fielding, batting, warming up, or on deck. Warning given for first offense. An out will be assessed for any further offense. Coaches may not stand behind the backstop.
- 11.8.1. **EXCEPTION** - A batter may be "on deck" only when accompanied by a manager, other adult coach, or parent who may assist. Only one batter may be "on deck" at a time. A batter may not be "on deck" directly behind the backstop. It will be the responsibility of the adult accompanying the batter to ensure the batter is not presenting a safety risk to others, and that the batter is sufficiently clear of the playing field so as not to be at risk of injury from a batted/thrown ball.
- 11.8.2. **EXCEPTION** - A pitcher may warm-up prior to entrance into a game only when accompanied by a manager, other adult coach, or parent who may assist. Only one pitcher may warm-up at a time. It will be the responsibility of the adult accompanying the pitcher to ensure the pitcher is not presenting a safety risk to others, and that the pitcher is sufficiently clear of the playing field so as not to be at risk of injury from a batted/thrown ball.
- 11.9. Other than as defined in the **BASE COACHES** section of these rules, and the two exceptions noted in 11.8 above, all coaches are to remain in the dugout. A warning will be issued for the first offense. An ejection will be issued for any further offenses.
- 11.10. There will be no throwing of equipment such as helmets and bats. It will be in umpires' judgment to issue a warning and an out or an ejection for any infraction. If the third out has been completed, the out will be applied to the next inning. For the second offense, an out and ejection of thrower. For unintentional slipping of a bat, there will be a warning to both player and coach for first offense and an out assessed for subsequent offenses.

## 12. PROCEDURES

### 12.1. Lightning and Inclement Weather Policy (OHSAA Policy)

- 12.1.1. **Recognition** - Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators, commissioners and contest officials shall be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately two to three miles, ANYTIME that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:
  - 12.1.1.1. **Monitor Weather Patterns** – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.
  - 12.1.1.2. **National Weather Service** – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions. Any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury or death even if it does not meet the criteria for severe weather. Therefore, anytime thunderstorms are in the forecast (even if it is only a 20 percent chance), event organizers shall be at a heightened level of awareness to the potential danger of lightning.
- 12.1.2. **Evacuation** – If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues.
- 12.1.3. **THIRTY-MINUTE RULE** – Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.**

### 12.2. General Weather/Rainouts Guidelines

- 12.2.1. It is our standard practice to call games on account of weather AT THE FIELD.
- 12.2.2. Therefore, all players, coaches and parents are expected to go to their appointed field at the appropriate time for their game, regardless of weather condition.
- 12.2.3. If conditions permit, we will make every attempt to get scheduled games played.
- 12.2.4. If conditions do not permit, the game will be cancelled and rescheduled.
- 12.2.5. Occasionally, games will be cancelled in advance if a check of the fields determines that it/they are unplayable. Also, if conditions are poor for an extended period during the day on a game day, we will attempt to cancel the game(s) in advance.

- 12.2.6. When in doubt, show up at the field.
- 12.3. **Cancelled Games**
  - 12.3.1. If your game is cancelled either beforehand or during the game (lightning, rain, unplayable field, etc.), please notify your Commissioner as soon as possible.
  - 12.3.2. Every attempt, with the assistance and approval of the league commissioner, should be made to reschedule games.
  - 12.3.3. Rained out games shall not replace a dual team practice.
- 12.4. Communications
  - 12.4.1. During the season, please contact your Commissioner with ANY questions you may have. The Commissioners attend weekly board meetings during the season and are update on virtually all issues.
  - 12.4.2. If you cannot contact your Commissioner, please contact the Trustee responsible for Coaches and Commissioners.
- 12.5. End of Season Activities/All-Star Teams
  - 12.5.1. Typically, division-wide picnics and trophy presentations are held for all teams. Details regarding these events are provided towards the end of the season.
  - 12.5.2. All-Star teams are formed for the INSTRUCTIONAL division.