



# 5 Year Old Coach Pitch/Tee Ball Rules

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## **RULES OF PLAY**

This league at Shades Mountain Park is organized as a coach-pitch baseball program for youth, age 5. The rules set forth below shall govern all play.

### **PLAYER'S AGE**

Participation in this league shall be open to any approved youth who is 5 or 6 years of age on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year. For the fall season, participation is set by the youth's age on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the upcoming year. Playing up in an older league is not allowed except to allow a player to play with his/her grade level or in other extenuating circumstances as determined by the Board in its sole discretion.

### **100. EQUIPMENT**

101. The official ball for this league shall be a baseball approved by the Shades Mountain Park Board of Directors.
102. No metal cleats shall be allowed.
103. Approved (unaltered) baseball bats, as defined in the SMP Bat Rules found on the Shades Mountain Park website, may be used. Bats that are broken, cracked or dented shall be removed upon discovery without penalty.
104. All batters and baserunners must wear batting helmets with full ear flaps and a face shield. Any baserunner that, in the umpire's judgment, deliberately removes his/her helmet should be given a warning. Any subsequent offense will result in the player being called out.
105. Equipment must be kept in the dugout when not in use.
106. Approved batting tees will be provided by the park.
107. A first basemen's mitt may be used by the first baseman only.
108. The pitcher must wear a mask and a chest guard
109. Proper catchers' protective equipment will be provided by the park and must be worn by the catcher at all time. The catcher should also wear an athletic cup.
110. All players must be in full baseball uniform with shirt tucked inside his/her pants during the game.

## **200. REGULATION GAME/TIME LIMITS**

201. A regulation game should consist of four (4) full innings. Fewer innings may be played based on the time limits set in Rule 202.
202. No inning may start later than seventy-five (75) minutes from the start time. Stoppage of play on the home team's last batter will constitute the start of the next inning.
203. Score will be kept. If there is a tie at the end of regulation as defined in Rules 201 and 202, the game result will be a tie.
204. There will be two umpires calling each game.

## **300. THE PLAYING FIELD**

301. The defensive infield coach's box will be positioned outside his dugout and be a minimum of three (3) feet wide and six (6) feet long and positioned no closer than six (6) feet to the base path.
302. The pitching coach should throw from a distance no closer than twenty (20) feet from home plate. A line designating the minimum distance should be marked on the field.
303. Batters boxes will be drawn 3 ft. wide and 6 ft. long and positioned 4 inches from the outside edge of the plate (not the center). There should be 3 feet in front and 3 feet in back of the middle of home plate.
304. The base paths will be fifty (50) feet.

## **400. OFFENSE**

401. The batting order shall consist of all players on each team. Players will bat in continuous order beginning with the leadoff batter each inning. In situations where the teams have an uneven number of players, the team with the lower number will bat through its lineup again, until it will have had the same number of batters as the opposing team for the inning. In this situation, the next batter in the order will lead off the following inning. For example, if Team A has nine (9) players and Team B has ten (10) players, Team A's leadoff hitter will be its first and last batter in inning one. In the second inning, Team A's batter #2 will lead off and bat last.

402. The batting order may not be changed once the game has started. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order.

403. Base coaches shall remain in their coaching boxes at first base and third base at all times, unless player safety dictates otherwise. The pitching coach is positioned between home plate and the pitcher's circle to pitch to the batter and must immediately leave the playing field and remove the bat and/or tee, if needed once the ball is put into play. There may also be a coach behind home plate in the designated area to assist with gathering balls and getting them back to the pitching coach. These are the only coaches allowed on the field for the offensive team's at bat.

404. Coaches may position batters as they wish, as long as the batter stays in the confines of the batter's box. Coaches are strongly cautioned against turning their batters at an angle to hit the ball down one of the baselines. This practice teaches poor skills and is not in the best interest of the player.

405. Prior to hitting off the tee, each batter will receive five (5) pitches to put the ball into play, regardless of the quality of the pitch or if any of the first four pitches were batted foul. If the fifth pitch is batted foul, the batter will be offered another pitch until the ball is put into play or the pitch is missed. After five (5) pitches, and if the batter doesn't hit or foul off the pitch, the batter is required to hit off the tee.

406. In situations where a batter hits off of the tee, the batter will only be allowed a single and must stop at first base. All other base runners can advance only one base, if they are forced. If not forced, bases runners may not advance a base on a ball hit from the tee. (when the batters hits off the tee, any runner who is not forced to run can be put out if they leave the base.)

407. Coaches should not elevate the tee in order to aid the player in swinging up on the ball and producing a fly ball hit. This practice teaches poor baseball skills and will not be tolerated. Coaches who insist on teaching players to swing up at the ball may be warned and even sanctioned or suspended

408. If a batted ball hits the pitching coach and, in the umpire's judgment, the pitching coach made an effort to avoid contact or was protecting himself, it will be considered a dead ball and the batter will be awarded first base and any baserunners that are forced to a base will be allowed to advance to that base. If the pitching coach intentionally contacts the ball, in the umpire's judgment, the batter will be out and no baserunners may advance.

409. The dirt in front of home plate is considered foul territory. So, any ball struck (even though part of the tee may have been struck), whether by pitch or tee, and traveling into, and remaining in, the grass in front of home plate shall be a fair ball, so long as the ball is touched in fair territory or passes first or third base before going foul.

410. No bunting will be allowed. Half-swings will be called a bunt. In the event of a bunt, it will count as a missed pitch against the batter.

411. A batter cannot be out of the batter's box when the ball is hit. This includes stepping on home plate. If this happens the batter will be called out.
412. After one (1) warning per game per player for slinging his/her bat, the batter will be called out for each additional time he/she slings his/her bat.
413. Baserunners shall not leave their base before the ball is hit by the batter. If this occurs, the defensive coach has the choice of accepting the play or requiring the batter to hit again.
414. If an offensive coach physically assists a baserunner while the ball is in play, the runner will be called out.
415. When the last batter comes to the plate, the head coach will notify the umpire and defensive team that he/she is the last batter of the inning. Stoppage of play for the last batter is set forth in Rule 602.

## **500. DEFENSE**

501. All players on each team will play defense simultaneously in each inning, but only six (6) may play the infield: one (1) inside the pitcher's circle, four (4) in the normal positions for first base, second base, third base and shortstop, and one (1) at catcher, which is required. All other players should be positioned in the outfield. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass. If an outfielder starts the play in the infield dirt, the offensive coach gets the choice of accepting the play or requiring the batter to hit again. Throughout the season, players should be rotated through positions so that all players have an opportunity to play multiple positions. Accordingly, each player shall play at least one inning in the infield every game in the regular season. This stipulation does not apply for the post-season tournament.
502. Two defensive coaches will be allowed on the field: one (1) in right field positioned on the foul line, one (1) in left field positioned on the foul line. One (1) infield coach is permitted to stand in the coach's box, as defined in Rule 301, outside his dugout to coach the infield. Defensive coaches should not touch or physically assist a player during play under any circumstance.
503. Except in the event of an injury, players may not change positions during an inning. Example: A player cannot play shortstop for one batter and then move to the outfield for the next. Players can move freely left or right, back or in, so long as in accordance with Rule 501.

504. The pitcher must have one (1) foot in contact with the circle when the ball is hit. If this rule is violated, then the offensive team gets its choice of accepting the play or allowing the batter to bat again.
505. No rolling of the ball underhanded on the ground will be allowed. No outs will be allowed by rolling the ball. Runners will automatically be safe if defensive team rolls the ball.
506. Infielders will, when cleanly fielding a hit ball, attempt to make an appropriate play, such as throwing out a base runner, rather than making a shortcut play to prevent runners from advancing. We are teaching and reinforcing baseball knowledge and the skills that will be necessary for our children to advance to the next league.
507. Players should throw the ball to the base when attempting to make a play, unless it's a natural baseball play. Only the first baseman can tag 1B, only the second baseman or shortstop can tag 2B, only the third baseman can tag 3B and only the catcher can tag home plate. Outfielders must throw the ball in from the outfield; they cannot run it into the infield. If any such play outside of this rule were to result in an out, the baserunner will be ruled safe. Certain situations may arise where a natural play may fall outside of these scenarios. In these rare instances, it's the umpire's judgment to allow the play to result in an out.
508. If the ball is thrown out of the playing field (defined as under or over the fence around the field, into the dugout, or stuck under a fence), play stops and all baserunners are allowed to advance one base beyond the base they were attempting.
509. The pitcher cannot tag anyone out after fielding the ball except: a runner running to home plate or a batter running to first, but then, only if the ball is batted fair down the first base line, third base line, or right in front of home plate. In all other cases, the ball must be thrown to the proper base for an out to be recorded. The pitcher cannot field a ball in the circle and run home to force out a baserunner at the plate.
510. If a ball is thrown to any base in an attempt to make a "baseball play" on a runner and the ball is overthrown, no advancement is allowed by the runner on which the play is being made. Other baserunners may advance one base, beyond the base they were attempting, at their own risk. If a throw is made on one of the advancing runners, play will continue as a live ball and all runners are free to advance at their own risk. This "overthrow" rule only applies to throws made from the infield.

511. A ball batted fair that bounces over, through, under, or becomes stuck in the fence, is a ground rule double.
512. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.
513. If a player is injured by being hit by the ball and cannot continue play, time will be called by the umpire and all players awarded one base.
514. Defensive infielders should be encouraged to stay out of the baseline and not stand on a base, in order to not interfere with baserunners. However, because of the frequency of this occurring at this age, umpires will give warnings to try and teach the kids proper play. Unless the umpire determines that the interference was egregious, in his sole judgment, the outcome of the play will not be altered.

**600. PLAY-STOPPING.**

- 601.** Holding the baseball above the head and asking for timeout is the method of stopping play. Play will stop when the timeout is recognized by the umpire, even if a verbal request was not made. Any infielder that has control of the ball in front of a baserunner in the baseline can call timeout. The player should always attempt to face off the lead runner. If timeout is requested behind the lead runner, baserunners in front of where the timeout was requested are free to advance. However, once the umpire has recognized timeout, whether or not the player is in front of the lead runner, a player that is stationary on a base shall not advance to the next base and a runner in between bases will stop at the next base.
- 602.** A caught fly ball will result in the batter being called out. Other baserunners may advance at their own risk. Double and triple plays are allowed. Play should be stopped according to the normal rules for stopping play, per Rule 601.

**700. APPEALS AND PROTESTS**

701. Appeals will be made by the head coach only after timeout has been given by the umpire and before the first pitch is made to the next batter. The head coach will make the appeal to the umpire. Once the umpire makes his decision, there is no other in-game appeal and the game will play on. If the head coach wants to protest the decision, he will notify the umpire and opposing head coach. At the conclusion of the game and within 24 hours, the protest will be discussed with the league commissioner who will make the final decision.

## **800. MISCELLANEOUS**

801. Playing illegal players will result in a forfeit of a game. The only eligible players are players on a team's official roster or a borrowed player from the Play-Up/Over list which will be distributed to the head coaches by the league commissioner prior to Opening Day. A borrowed player must play in the outfield and must bat last in the lineup. A player may be borrowed a maximum of three (3) games per season, unless sanctioned by the league commissioner.
802. If one team is unable to field the appropriate number of players for the scheduled game that team will not be forced to forfeit the game. Coaches are encouraged to use the 5YO Play-Up List to substitute for known player absences and have a full roster. Because of the potential batting advantage created by Rule 401, in situations where one team has eight (8) players or less, that team must play without a pitcher on defense. All other positions should be filled according to Rule 501.
803. The Home Team head coach shall be responsible for preparing the field for play. At the conclusion of the last game of the day, the home head coach shall be responsible for turning off the lights and returning the game tee to the storage area.
804. Besides stopping play, time-outs can only be requested by the head coach.
805. Each team may have a coach or parent in the dugout during the games to maintain order, manage equipment, and manage the batting order to speed play. This individual cannot be on the field except between innings.
806. Coaches will be responsible for the disposition of their fans and will be expected to attempt to address unsportsmanlike and/or disruptive behavior and if necessary, notify the league commissioner.
807. The visiting team is required to have at least one parent in the press box during each game to operate the scoreboard. The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook in the press box. No more than three (3) people are allowed in the press box at one time: Children under the age of 13 are not allowed in the press box for any reason. According to park rules, PA announcers should be adults. League coaches should have a complete copy of press box rules.
808. No adult, other than coaches, shall be allowed on the field during the game without consent of the umpire. No persons except the officially registered players of the team, the head coach and assistant coaches shall be allowed on the bench during the game. Persons failing to leave the field at the request of the umpire could result in the forfeiture of the game.

809. The league commissioner will have final say on any matters or situations that may arise that are not covered in these rules. If a rule is unclear, the league will observe the spirit of the rule as ultimately clarified by the commissioner. Any questions, objections or requested clarification of the rules should be addressed directly to the league commissioner.

## **900. GAME CONDUCT**

901. Remember – The game is for our children! The league is designed to be a teaching league for the kids. Cheer for both teams, not against the opponent.

*Edited and adopted December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by the Shades Mountain Park Board*