

## **2021 ROOKIES BASEBALL LEAGUE RULES & INFORMATION**

### **Oakdale Athletic Association**

***The mission of the OAA Rookies League is to provide an enjoyable, positive environment in which participants learn baseball fundamentals and sportsmanship.***

#### **1. Season Schedule & Information**

- 1.1. The season shall consist of at least 8 regular season games and at least 2 post season games.
- 1.2. Each team involved in a regular season game shall send an e-mail to rookiesbaseball@oaaonline.com including the date, team names, and the final score.

#### **2. Field Dimensions & Information**

- 2.1. The distance between each base is 60 feet.
- 2.2. The Pitching Machine shall be 46 feet from home plate. A 5 foot radius circle should be marked around the machine.
- 2.3. Pitch speed shall be set to 35 mph. On June 14th, this will be moved to 40 mph.
- 2.4. The machine may be adjusted at the beginning of each half inning. The machine may be adjusted at any other time unless the opposing coach objects. Adjusting the machine is intended to allow the machine to most consistently pitch strikes without delaying the game.
- 2.5. The pitching machine shall be used for the entire game. Each team shall designate an adult to "feed" the pitching machine. **A minor shall never fulfill this responsibility.** In case of an electrical or machine failure, an adult may pitch overhand to his/her own team from a distance of at least 36 feet, or teams can agree to reschedule the game. Notify the director when these issues arise!
- 2.6. During play, there are four adults on the field during the game. Three from the offensive team: a first base coach, a third base coach, and an adult feeding the pitching machine, and one from the defensive team: an adult returning baseballs after the completed at-bat to the adult feeding the machine.
- 2.7. All defensive coaches other than the adult feeding the pitching machine must remain in the dugout, unless there is an injury timeout.

#### **3. Practice Before Games**

- 3.1. The visiting team will have the infield 30 minutes prior to the game.
- 3.2. The home team will have the infield 15 minutes prior to the game.
- 3.3. Games have priority over practices.

#### **4. Game Length**

- 4.1. All regular season league games will be a maximum 6 innings in length. A new inning shall not begin after 90 minutes have elapsed. Innings started prior to 90 minutes shall be completed.
- 4.2. A half inning consists of three outs or ten completed at-bats, whichever comes first. A batter's inability to hit a fair ball, aka a "strikeout", counts as an out. The first batter of the second or subsequent inning is the player following the last completed at-bat in the preceding inning. Players bat in order regardless of whether they played the field during the defensive half inning.
- 4.3. During the regular season, extra innings shall not be played. During the tournament, extra innings shall be played to determine a winner.
- 4.4. If weather, time, or darkness prevents a full 6 inning game, the following rules apply:
- 4.4.1. If less than 3 ½ innings have completed, the entire game shall be replayed.
  - 4.4.2. If 3 ½ innings have completed, but less than 4 innings have completed, and
    - 4.4.2.1. the home team is winning, the game is complete and shall not be rescheduled. The final score shall be the score when the game was stopped.
    - 4.4.2.2. otherwise, the entire game shall be replayed.
  - 4.4.3. If 4 or more innings have completed, the game is complete and shall not be rescheduled. The final score shall be
    - 4.4.3.1 the score when the game was stopped whenever the home team scores more runs than does the visiting team in the incomplete inning. The rationale is having fewer completed offensive half innings should not disadvantage the home team.
    - 4.4.3.2 otherwise, the score as of the last completed inning.

#### **5. Offense**

- 5.1. Each batter will generally receive up to 5 pitches and never more than 6. If a fair ball has not been hit after 5 pitches and:
- 5.1.1 the fifth pitch was a foul tip (caught by the catcher), the batter shall be called out.
  - 5.1.2. the fifth pitch was a foul out, the batter shall be called out,
  - 5.1.3. the fifth pitch was a foul ball, the batter shall receive one additional pitch,
  - 5.1.4. the fifth pitch was not struck by the batter, the batter is called out.
- 5.2. If a batted ball strikes the machine or the adult feeding the machine, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base. Runners return to base occupied at time of pitch, unless forced to advance.
- 5.3 If a thrown ball strikes the machine, the ball is dead and all runners shall be awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball was released from the fielder's hand. *This applies only while a play is being made. It does not apply if the fielder was returning the ball to the pitching area.*
- 5.4. If the umpire determines that a player has thrown his bat, a warning shall be given to the batter and his team. Each subsequent batter on the warned team throwing his bat shall be called out. Ball is dead. Runners shall not advance.
- 5.4. Collisions. Interference and obstruction are difficult calls for umpires. These calls often

involve judgment and the umpire's judgment shall prevail. Coaches are strongly encouraged to understand the rules, particularly concerning interference and obstruction, and teach them to each player and volunteer umpire. In this regard, our league rules are similar to Official Baseball Rules with one exception: extra caution is expected of runners to avoid collisions with fielders by either sliding or avoiding significant contact. Additional thoughts:

5.4.1. Any player intentionally initiating malicious contact with another player shall be removed from at least the remainder of the game and potentially from the league. This is often a difficult call because the umpire must assess the player's intent. Obstruction is not a license for a runner to maliciously collide with a fielder. In a case like this, obstruction may be called, but the runner shall be removed from at least the remainder of the game and a substitute runner employed if necessary.

5.4.2. A runner initiating contact with a fielder, who has possession of the ball or is fielding a thrown ball, without making an effort to slide or avoid contact, shall be called out.

5.4.3 A runner initiating contact intended to cause the fielder to drop the ball shall be called out.

5.4.4. A batter or runner impeding a fielder's ability to field a **batted** fair ball before it passes or touches an infielder other than the pitcher shall be called out.

5.4.5. A batter or runner **intentionally** impeding a fielder's ability to field a **batted** or **thrown** ball shall be called out. If the intentional interference is an obvious attempt to disrupt a double play, the runner committing the interference and the other batter/runner involved shall be called out.

5.4.6. In each of these cases of offensive interference, the ball is immediately dead and:

5.4.6.1. If batter did not reach first base prior to the incident, the batter, if not called out, is awarded first base, and all other runners shall return to base occupied at time of pitch delivery, unless forced to advance by batter.

5.4.6.2. If batter reached first base prior to the incident, the batter/runners not associated with the interference shall return to base last legally touched at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance by batter.

5.5. Upon the batter hitting a fair ball, runners may advance at least one base and may continue to advance until an infielder, or any fielder after a play has been attempted, has control of the ball anywhere on the infield dirt (fair or foul territory) and has ceased attempting to make a play. Runners less than one third of the way to a subsequent base shall return to the last legally touched base. This applies to all batters, including the "last" batter, i.e. batter completing the tenth at-bat in an inning.

5.6. When a thrown ball goes out of play, the batter and each runner shall advance two bases from the base last legally touched at the time

5.6.1 of pitch when the errant throw was the first play made by an infielder and the ball was released before all runners, including the batter, advanced one base.

5.6.2 the ball was released from the thrower's hand in all other cases.

5.6.3 Note: Circumstances may prevent advancing two bases. For example: the batter has passed first base but the runner initially on first has not yet reached second base,

and an outfielder throws the ball out of play. The runner is awarded second and third, and therefore the batter, although having passed first base, is awarded only second base.

5.7. Runners must not lead off or steal bases. A runner leaving a base before the ball is either hit or reaches home plate shall be called out. Ball is dead and the pitch is declared a no-pitch.

5.8. A runner going more than three feet away from a normal path to a base to **avoid being tagged** shall be called out. Ball remains in play. A runner may go more than three feet away from a normal path to a base to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.

5.9. The infield fly rule shall not apply.

5.10. Batter shall not intentionally bunt. Proceed as though it were a foul ball.

5.11. A courtesy runner (the most recent player to be put out) will be allowed for a player injured in the game, or if a base runner will be the catcher next inning and there are either 2 outs or the 10th batter is due to bat. The sole purpose for running for the next inning catcher is to allow the catcher to begin putting on the gear, thus keeping the game moving.

5.12. Illegal bat. A batter having an illegal bat in the batter's box prior to hitting a fair ball, shall be immediately called out. When a batter hits a fair ball using an illegal bat, the defensive team may choose between the result of the play or the batter being called out and all runners return to base occupied at time of pitch. The illegal bat must be discovered and the defense must choose before the first pitch to the next batter.

## 6. **Defense**

6.1. The defensive team shall position up to 10 players in the field: 6 Infield Positions (Pitcher, Catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base and Shortstop) and 4 Outfield Positions (Left Field, Left Center Field, Right Center Field and Right Field).

6.2. The catcher should be encouraged, but not forced, to position himself within the catcher's box. *If the catcher doesn't position himself in the catcher's box, he is eligible to put out a batter on a fair ball, but ineligible on a foul ball.*

6.3. The pitcher must have at least one foot within the 5-foot radius of the pitching machine until the ball is hit.

6.4. 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, shortstop, and 3rd baseman must remain more than 55 feet from home plate until the ball is hit.

6.5. Outfielders must remain at least 25 feet from the baselines until the ball is hit (Note: at Walton Park, this means the outfielders must be on the grass). Each player should be encouraged to play his position and allow other players to do so.

6.6. Adjusting for absences, playing time for each player shall be as equal as possible over the course of the regular season and each player shall play a minimum of two outfield positions and two infield positions.

6.7. Playing time for each player shall be as equal as possible during a game. For example, a player shall not sit on the bench a second inning until each player has sat at least one inning.

6.8. Each player must play a minimum of two innings in the infield prior to the end of the sixth inning.

6.9. Players shall not play the same position more than two innings in a single game, *unless the game goes into extra innings.*

6.10. Exceptions to equal participation are safety issues and players failing to participate in practice regularly. If this occurs, discuss with parents, notify the director by email ([rookiesbaseball@oaaonline.com](mailto:rookiesbaseball@oaaonline.com)), and notify the opposing coach before the game begins.

6.11. Each player playing the **Pitcher position is required to wear a Fielding Mask**. Each team will be provided one at the beginning of the season.

## **7. Umpires**

7.1. During the regular season, each team should provide at least one adult as an umpire. One method is to have the first base coach make calls at first, the adult feeding the machine makes calls at second, the third base coach make calls at third, and the adult returning balls to the pitcher make calls at home plate.

7.2. During the tournament, umpires will be provided.

## **8. Uniforms and Equipment**

8.1. All batters and base runners must wear double ear-flap batting helmets.

8.2. Catchers must wear a protective skull helmet and mask, chest protector, shin guards, and groin protector. Catchers are not required to use a catcher's glove.

8.3. Players should wear the matching hats and jerseys issued to the team.

8.4. Players should wear long pants or baseball pants to protect legs while sliding.

8.5. Players must **not** wear metal cleats. Players may wear non-metal cleats or athletic shoes.

8.6. A small barrel bat (2 ¼ inches in diameter can be used if it:

8.6.1 has the USABat image imprinted on the bat, or

8.6.2 has the new USSSA image imprinted on the bat, or

8.6.3 has the old BPF 1.15 text imprinted on the bat, or

8.6.4 is wooden.

8.7. A big barrel bat (larger than 2 ¼ inches in diameter can be used if it:

8.7.1 has the USABat image imprinted on the bat, or

8.7.2 has the new USSSA image imprinted on the bat, or

8.7.3 has the BBCOR image imprinted on the bat, or

8.7.4 is wooden.

## **9. Game Rescheduling**

9.1. A game should be rescheduled if less than eight players are available to play. The opposing coach should be notified at least 24 hours before game time. Insufficient notification is subject to forfeit at the opposing coach's discretion.

9.2. The game should be replayed at a time and place agreed upon by both coaches, often a practice night within the following 2 weeks. It is critical that all games are made up prior to the tournament considering the regular season results may be used to determine tournament placement.

9.3. If lightning is seen, the game shall be stopped immediately. A game must not resume before 30 consecutive minutes without lightning.

## **10. Additional Guidelines**

10.1. Good sportsmanship must be shown at all times. Disrespectful and disparaging comments should be discouraged.

10.2. Alcohol is prohibited on and around the field and in the parking lots. This includes coaches and parents, games and practices.

**Please remember this is an instructional, recreational baseball league. Adults are setting an example for the kids.**