



# Dover Baseball Instructional Division Guidelines

Revised: March 2026

The Dover Baseball Association is affiliated with Babe Ruth League, Inc., which includes the Cal Ripken Baseball League. These organizations have adopted the Official Baseball Rules, published by the Commissioner of Baseball, as their primary playing rules. These rules allow for local league modifications to best suit the needs of its players.

The following modifications to the existing national rules have been generated, and Board approved, with the intent of helping every player reach their full potential in a safe and competitive environment.

## **I. Player Eligibility**

- A. Players participating in the Instructional Division must be 5 or 6 years of age by the Babe Ruth designated cut- off date of April 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **II. Game Day Rules and Expectations**

- A. There will be 1 weekday game, and 1 game on Saturday. Games are played at Garrison Elementary School fields.
- B. A game will last no more than 90 minutes of play, or 6 full innings, whichever comes first.
- C. Games must be a minimum of 60 minutes. Any inning completed before 60 minutes have elapsed necessitates the start of a new inning.
- D. All weekday games are scheduled to begin at 5:30 pm. Players should arrive 30 minutes early to warm-up. Game scores and league standings are not recorded for this division.
- E. To ensure equal batting opportunities for each player, coaches will, at the beginning of the season, create a continuous batting order and will use this order for each game of the season. The next games lineup begins with the player who would have been up next in the prior game.
- F. At the start of the season, outs are encouraged but not observed. During this time teams will bat through their lineups each inning. Players are not asked to leave the base.



- G. Midway through the season outs will be enforced, and players who are out will leave the base.
- H. There is no leading, stealing, or advancing on an overthrow.
- I. Coaches are expected to be in the field when their team is on defense to help keep the kids alert and engaged.
- J. On an outfield hit players can continue to advance bases until the ball returns to the infield. Coaches should encourage outfielders to throw the ball into the infield.
- K. Coaches will pitch to the batter. Each batter will receive 5 reasonably good pitches. Coaches may want to kneel when pitching to throw at a level trajectory. If the batter does not hit the ball after 5 good pitches, then a tee will be used. **Coaches should limit to just 5 pitches as to keep the flow of the game moving.** Moving along allows more at bats for everyone and helps maintain attention spans in the field.
- L. There are no walks, strike outs or bunting.
- M. Players should field all 9 positions, including the catcher's position. A 4<sup>th</sup> outfield should be used if a team has 10 players present. If there are 8 or fewer players available, the team may elect to play without a catcher.
- N. Once outs are played, (approximately 1/2 way through the season), a 1/2 inning will be complete when either: 4 runs are scored or 3 outs have been made, whichever comes first.
- O. On innings that don't end in a third out (when outs are played), the last batter of the inning can run around all the bases and all runners should score (this may seem silly but kids love to be the home run hitter).

### **III. Player Safety**

- A. Only softie balls will be used during games and practices.
- B. Only the player at bat will have a bat in their hands. The on-deck hitter should not have a bat.
- C. All batters and base runners will wear a helmet while on the field of play.
- D. Batters and base runners will keep their helmets on from the time they enter the designated on-deck area until the time they return to the dugout after the play is over.
- E. All players should wear a protective cup/jill during all games and practices.



#### **IV. Day of Game Responsibilities**

##### **The Home Team is:**

- A. Listed first on the schedule and will use the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout.
- B. Responsible for preparing the field for play; including raking the base paths and putting out the bases.
- C. Responsible for ensuring the home dugout is free and clear of all trash (wrappers and bottles) before leaving the field.

##### **The Visiting Team is:**

- D. Listed second on the schedule and will use the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout.
- E. Responsible for maintaining the field after play; including raking the base paths and putting away the bases, and making sure the equipment shed is locked.
- F. Responsible for ensuring the visiting dugout is free and clear of all trash (wrappers and bottles) before leaving the field.

#### **V. Division Director Responsibilities**

##### **A. Communication**

- 1) The Division Director is responsible for maintaining contact with coaches and parents regarding issues pertaining to the division.
- 2) Should anyone need any equipment before or during the season please contact the Division Director.
- 3) The Division Director will have the option to convert the weekday game into a scrimmage game for the first couple weeks of the season.

##### **B. Cancellations and Makeups**

- 1) Due to weather or field conditions, League and city-wide cancellations may be made by Dover Baseball or the City of Dover. Announcement of these cancellations will be posted on the association's web page.
- 2) If a coach feels it is necessary to cancel games, it should be done only after consultation and agreement with the coach from the opposing team. Keep in mind, it is a short season, making up games can be difficult and we live in New Hampshire so the weather is not always ideal. Cancelling games should only be done if



necessary.

- 3) An attempt should be made to make up all games cancelled - All make-up games must be rescheduled with the Division Director.

## **VI. Parent Responsibility**

### **A. Communication**

- 1) It is the parent's responsibility to appropriately communicate with coaches any concerns they may have regarding team issues.
- 2) It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the Dover Baseball Code of Conduct policy.
- 3) Please make sure to go over the code of conduct with your player as well.

## **VII. Coaching and Player Development**

### **A. Weekly Field Time**

Weekly field time should include at least one practice and two games each week. For the first 3 weeks of the season, the weekday game will be more of a skills practice with a scrimmage at the end. Coaches will have some flexibility with this. Week 4 will be 2 games per week. This breakdown of games and practices may be subject to change at the Division Directors discretion.

### **B. Player Development Expectations**

By the end of the Instructional season players should be demonstrating a basic understanding of:

1. Field set-up and base-running concepts:
  - a. The different bases and fielding positions;
  - b. Running through 1<sup>st</sup> base and home plate vs. stopping at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
2. Basic fielding concepts:
  - a. The Ready Position;
  - b. Playing their position vs chasing the ball in packs.



3. Basic hitting concepts and hitting safety:
  - a. Stance and swing;
  - b. Proper holding of the bat;
  - c. Players should be developing a level swing vs. an upper-cut swing;
  - d. Swinging when others are a safe distance away;
  - e. No throwing of the bat;
  - f. Keeping eye on the ball to hit a thrown ball.
  
4. Basic Individual Catching and Throwing Technique:
  - a. Using two hands to catch the ball;
  - b. Catching out in front of the body;
  - c. Throwing from a side-ways direction while making a "T";
  - d. Using the front foot and glove to direct the ball;
  - e. Throwing with an overhand motion.

**\*\*FINAL NOTE\*\***

The game of baseball is just that, A GAME! Mistakes will be made. There will be fielding mistakes; there will be coaching mistakes; and there will be umpiring mistakes. But there should not be mistakes in behavior.

It is the objective of the Dover Baseball to teach the game of baseball and to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may be well adjusted, stronger, and happier children and will grow to be good, decent, healthy, and trustworthy citizens.

This objective can only be reached with the help of all; players, coaches and spectators alike! Dover Baseball has developed a Code of Conduct Policy that is intended to serve as a means of helping us meet this objective.

The policy can be found on the association website, <http://www.dovernhbaseball.org/>