

TEANECK BASEBALL ORGANIZATION

T-BALL DIVISION

(KINDERGARTEN & 1st GRADE)

The goal of the T-Ball Division is to provide a bridging experience between Instructional and the more competitive play that begins in the 2nd/3rd Grade Division. The rules for this Division have been redesigned with that concept in mind, with the first half of the season weighted toward instruction, followed by the introduction of competitive elements in the second half of the season. Coaches are expected to emphasize fundamental skill development and a positive experience for all participants throughout the entire season.

A. GENERAL RULES

- 1. SCORES AND STANDINGS:** Game scores will be kept but standings will not. There are no playoffs.
- 2. THE FIELD:** Bases shall be set 45' apart.
- 3. EQUIPMENT:**
 - a. Catchers: During the first half of the season (T-Ball), catchers need not wear catching gear. During the second half of the season (coach pitching), catchers must wear full gear: cup, mask, helmet, shin guards, and chest protector.
 - b. All boys must wear protective cups.
 - c. Metal cleats are prohibited.
 - d. All players are expected to wear non-metal cleats.
 - e. All players are expected to wear TBO hats, TBO shirts, and TBO pants.
 - f. No player shall be prohibited from playing due to non-compliance with rule d. or rule e. Managers, coaches, and umpires shall use common sense in addressing such situations.
- 4. BATS:** Only USABat-approved "Tee Ball Bats" may be used. Compliant bats will be provided to each team by TBO. Parents who wish to bring their own bats should consult www.usabat.com to confirm that their bat is listed as a "Tee Ball Bat" in the "Length" column.
- 5. HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:** The home team is responsible for raking the field at the end of the game and for putting away all equipment in lockboxes.
- 6. GAME CANCELLATIONS/RE-SCHEDULING:** No game may be canceled or rescheduled without the prior approval of the Schedule Coordinator.
- 7. UMPIRES:**

- a. Only the umpire shall have the authority to call or suspend a game once the game has commenced. If a manager or coach disagreed with an umpire's decision and the matter cannot be resolved between the umpire and the manager or coach, the matter shall be escalated to the Head Umpire.
 - b. If umpires are not present, the managers may agree to utilize anyone they deem suitable.
 - c. The umpire is responsible for setting out the bases and for other related matters as set forth in these Rules.
 - d. Umpires are expected to enforce all rules as written. Managers/coaches may not alter or suspend rules under any circumstances.
 - e. Umpires shall assist coaches in teaching players the rules of baseball during the course of games. Calls that players do not understand shall be treated as positive teachable moments by both umpires and coaches.
- 8. ABUSE:** Verbal or physical abuse of any umpire, player, manager, coach, or spectator by any other umpire, player, manager, coach, or spectator will not be tolerated. The offender shall be subject to removal from the field at the discretion of the umpire or any TBO Board Member who views the abuse. If the offender refuses to leave, additional steps shall be taken, up to and including calling the police.
- 9. PROTESTS:** NO PROTESTS ALLOWED.

B. REGULAR SEASON – FIRST HALF

- 1. GAME LENGTH:** 6 innings or 1.5 hours, whichever comes first. No inning may commence after play has reached 1.5 hours but any inning in progress may be completed.
- 2. TEAMS:**
 - a. No minimum number of players is necessary to play a game.
 - b. All available players must be in the batting order. EXAMPLE: If 14 players are available, the batting order shall be 1-14.
- 3. FIELDING:**
 - a. All players shall play the field each inning. No substitutions necessary.
 - b. The field shall be divided into three zones, as follows: Zone 1 – LF/CF/RF; Zone 2 – 3B/SS/P; Zone 3 – 2B/1B/C.
 - c. If a team has more than 9 players in the field, additional players shall be considered part of Zone 1 if playing in the outfield, part of Zone 2 if playing on the left side of the infield, and part of Zone 3 if playing on the right side of the infield. There shall be no more than four players considered part of any single zone.
 - d. For example, a team with eleven fielders playing three outfielders, five infielders around the infield (3B/SS/standing on second base/2B/1B), two pitcher's helpers

(left and right side of the mound), and a catcher would have the following zones: Zone 1 – LF/CF/RF/fielder standing on second base; Zone 2 – 3B/SS/Left Pitcher's Helper; Zone 3 – 2B/1B/C/Right Pitcher's Helper.

- e. No fielder shall play in the same fielding zone for 2 consecutive innings, nor shall any fielder play the same position within a zone for more than 1 inning.
- f. Prior to the ball being batted, no fielder (except for the catcher) shall stand closer to the batter than 20'. Before play begins, the umpires shall mark an arc between the third-base line and the first-base line that is 20' from the tee.
- g. The fielding team may have one or two coaches in the field to encourage and instruct the fielders.
- h. There must be a player catcher at all times. The catcher need not wear gear but, if not wearing full catcher gear, must begin each play at least 5 feet away from the batting tee.
- i. There must be a different player catcher every inning.

4. BATTING:

- a. Players may only bat from a tee placed on top of home plate.
- b. Whenever a play at the plate is possible, a coach from the batting team shall be responsible to timely remove the tee.
- c. Any batted ball that does not travel 10' or more into fair territory shall be considered a foul ball. Before play begins, the umpires shall mark an arc between the third-base line and the first-base line that is 10' from the tee.
- d. Each batter shall have five swings to hit the ball fair. If a batter does not hit the ball fair in five swings, that batter shall be out.
- e. Every player on the team shall bat once per inning. Lineups shall be reversed from inning to inning (e.g., first inning: 1-9; second inning: 9-1, etc.).
- f. Whenever the fielding team makes 3 outs, the bases shall be cleared of all baserunners.
- g. When the final batter in the lineup is at bat, rules shall be applied as if there are two outs (e.g., if, on a batted ball, a runner crosses home plate but the batter is forced out at first, the run does not count).
- h. Subject to the foregoing, there shall no per-inning run limit.
- i. Anyone reporting to the game after the game has begun will be added to the bottom of the lineup.

5. BASERUNNING:

- a. Baserunners may not leave the base until the ball is hit. There can be no play on a baserunner unless the ball is hit.
- b. On any batted fair ball that does not go past either the baseline between first base and second base or the baseline between second base and third base, the batter and each baserunner may advance (at their own risk) one base from where they were when the play began. On any batted fair ball that goes past either the baseline between first base and second base or the baseline between second base and third base, the batter and each baserunner may advance (at their own risk)

- no more than two bases from where they were when the play began. Once all runners have advanced the maximum number of allowed bases, the ball is dead
- c. There shall be no exceptions to the foregoing rule, regardless of the actions or inactions of the fielders. For example, on a batted fair ball fielded within the baselines that is thrown past the baselines in an attempt to make a play (e.g., an overthrow at second base), the baserunners may advance only one base from where they were before the batter hit the ball.
 - d. The runner is not out if, after making contact with the base, the base is displaced and the runner is tagged, as long as the runner stays where the base was. If the runner attempts to follow the displaced base or to progress to another base and is tagged, the runner is out.
 - e. Managers and coaches should encourage baserunners to slide on close plays. The “slide or avoid” rule is in effect: if a fielder is in possession of the ball and the runner attempts to reach base without sliding or avoiding the fielder, the runner is out. If a fielder is not in possession of the ball, he/she must allow the runner access to the base. Otherwise, it is obstruction and the runner is safe.
 - f. It shall also be deemed obstruction if a fielder fakes a catch or tag that causes the runner to alter his/her course of action during a play. In such cases, the runner will be awarded the base to which they were headed when the obstruction occurred.
 - g. Bat-throwing and head-first slides are not permitted due to safety concerns. A batter who throws his/her bat, and any runner who slides head-first, shall be called out. Coaches and umpires shall explain these rules to all players before each game begins. Once the game begins, no warnings will be given.
 - h. Stealing is NOT permitted.
 - i. Tagging up is permitted.
 - j. A pinch runner may be inserted if a player is injured while batting or running the bases. The pinch runner is the player who made the last batted out in the lineup. Pinch runners are not otherwise permitted.
 - k. In those leagues using safety bases: the first baseperson must touch the white part of the base for the runner/batter to be out. If the fielder touches the orange part, the batter/runner is not out. The batter/runner may touch either white or orange. However, if the batter/runner touches white and makes contact with the first baseman the batter/runner is out.
 - l. Bunting is not permitted.

6. PITCHING:

Not applicable.

C. REGULAR SEASON – SECOND HALF

1. GAME LENGTH: Unchanged.

2. TEAMS: Unchanged.

3. FIELDING:

- a. Unchanged.
- b. Unchanged.
- c. Unchanged.
- d. Unchanged.
- e. Unchanged.
- f. Unchanged.
- g. There must be a player catcher at all times. The catcher must wear full gear as set forth above under Equipment.
- h. Unchanged.
- i. No fielder (other than the catcher) may stand closer to home plate than the coach pitcher at the time a pitch is released.
- j. A batted ball that strikes a coach pitcher shall be considered in play.

4. BATTING:

- a. Balls and strikes are not called. Players must swing at no less than every other pitch. A player who does not swing at consecutive pitches will be assessed a strike.
- b. Once a player reaches two strikes, the tee shall be placed for that player on top of home plate, and that player shall have three additional swings to attempt to hit the ball fair. When a player is batting from a tee, Batting Rules 4.b. and 4.c. from the first half of the season shall apply.
- c. Lineups shall be shuffled from game to game. Coaches shall use their best efforts to ensure the players who bat towards the bottom of the lineup in one game bat towards the top of the lineup in the next game, and vice versa.
- d. Teams are limited to a maximum of four runs per inning during innings one through five.
- e. During the sixth inning, teams are limited to a maximum of seven runs.
- f. Anyone reporting to the game after the game has begun will be added to the bottom of the lineup.

5. BASERUNNING: Unchanged.

6. PITCHING:

- a. Coaches shall pitch all innings during the second half of the season.
- b. It is the responsibility of the coach pitcher to throw pitches that are capable of being hit without penalizing their batters.
- c. Coach pitchers are expected to pitch from no less than 20' from the back of home plate. Umpires and coaches shall use common sense if a coach, with the consent of the opposing coach, wishes to make occasional exceptions to this rule for specific players.
- d. A coach pitcher may not pitch underhand but may pitch with his/her knee on the ground.
- e. A coach pitcher must wear a baseball glove.