

## **5-6 Year Old Coach Pitch Rules & Regulations**

### **Team Composition:**

A total of 10 players play defense in the field: 6 infielders (including a catcher) and 4 outfielders. The catcher must be properly equipped. Protective cups are optional for this age group.

Arriving Late: Any player who arrives before the leadoff batter bats for a second time may enter the game immediately but must be added to the bottom of the batting order. If a player arrives after all players have batted once and the leadoff batter has taken a pitch, they may not enter the game.

The catcher must play his position at the start of the pitch.

### **Grace Period**

(10 minutes for the first game of the day; 5 minutes for all subsequent games)

A team will be allowed the grace period when they have less than **9 players**. If a team has less than 8 players once the grace period has expired, the game shall be declared a forfeit. If the game time has slipped more than the grace period during the day, the team has essentially had its grace period and a forfeit will be called as soon as the ump is ready to start the game.

If a forfeit is declared, the game will be played for 'fun' and experience. The two teams may split up or pick up other CCYA league players in the same age group.

### **Game Length**

The length of the game will be 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The game clock starts when the official announces the start time. The official is the time keeper. Both teams should record and agree on the start time provided by the official.

Once an inning has started, it must be finished, provided the home team is behind when it is their turn to bat. If 2 innings have been completed and the game is not tied, no new inning shall be started when there is less than 10 minutes remaining in the time limit.

## **Run Lead**

The following run leads will be in effect and end the game:

15 run lead after 3 innings (the score would be 15-0).

10 run lead after 4 innings (3 and ½ if home team is winning).

## **Regulation Game**

It is a regulation game if 2 or more innings have been completed.

### **If the game is called because of darkness, bad weather, etc.**

If a game has to end for any reason before the current inning has been completed, and at least 3 innings have been completed, the score of the last completed inning will be used to determine the winner. If the score is tied, the game will end in a tie. If less than 2 innings have been completed, then the game will need to resume at a later date. Be sure to record all outs and where the base runners are located.

If any game is tied at the end of regulation play, 1 extra inning will be played to try to avoid a tie. If after the extra inning the game is still tied, the game will be declared a tie and an official game.

The umpire may stop the game if all of the following conditions are met: 1) there is less than 10 minutes of game time remaining; 2) The home team is winning; and 3) The visiting team is not at bat.

## **Run Limit**

The “tie-plus-five” scoring rule shall be in effect. Each team may only score a maximum of 5 runs in the first inning. During the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> innings, the lead team may always score 5 runs even though the lead may be greater than 5. The team that is behind when batting after the first inning may always be able to tie the game and score an additional 5 runs to go ahead by 5. The 5<sup>th</sup> innings and all additional innings are played as unlimited scoring innings. Also, if the official is able to declare at the top of an inning that it will be the last; even if it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, scoring will be unlimited.

## **Batting**

Only one batter allowed in the on deck circle. All other players must remain in the dugout.

**Each batter gets 5 pitches or 3 strikes.** If the last pitch/swing is fouled, additional pitches will be granted. There is no limit on fouled balls. (Teach your batters to always swing at the last pitch!).

The umpire will advise both teams of the last pitch. The umpire will not call any balls or strikes. There will be no walks or free bases.

The batter will be called out if there is no contact with the ball on the 5<sup>th</sup> or last pitch.

All team players will bat in a set batting order. The batter must take a pitch before being considered out of order. **PENALTY: Batting out of order will result in that batter being out.**

Teams must bat their entire roster. In other words, if you have 12 players on your team; you will only field 10 of them but all 12 must be in your lineup.

If a player is injured/sick and unable to bat at his batting spot, the coach has the option of taking an out (so the player may return to the game in his same batting order) or not taking the out (the player then may not return to the game at all, offensively or defensively.) If by removing this player the team is reduced to less than 8 players, the team has the choice to continue the game or forfeit the game. If the game is forfeited, the forfeiting team can get players from the other team or other CCYA players in the same age group and continue playing for fun and experience.

Bunting not permitted. No fake bunts allowed. A player (showing bunt) may not fake bunt and swing in an effort to hit the ball. **PENALTY: Batter is out and the ball is dead.**

## **Pitching**

There will be a line 25 feet from home plate. The coach-pitcher must stand behind this line and must pitch over-handed. **PENALTY: ball is dead and pitch counted.**

The player-pitcher must stand even or behind the coach-pitcher for safety. **PENALTY: Batter will be awarded first base.** Other runners advance if forced to. The player-pitcher may wear a protective helmet with face mask. He/she is encouraged to wear a heart guard.

A total of 5 pitches can be thrown (more if the 5<sup>th</sup> call is fouled; less if 3 strikes occur before the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch). If a batter swings and misses 3 times, the batter is out. The fifth pitch may be fouled or tipped indefinitely. There are no bases on balls or hit by pitcher advancements to first base.

**The coach-pitcher is not allowed to instruct base runners. We want the base runners to learn to listen to the base coaches.** **PENALTY:** Each team will get two warnings. Starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense and for each additional offense, the team will be charged 1 out. If this makes the 3<sup>rd</sup> out, the inning is over and no runs will be counted. If it is the first or second out, runners will advance as normal.

The coach-pitcher needs to leave fair territory when the ball is live. If the coach-pitcher makes contact with a live-batted ball, the ball is dead, play is stopped, and the play will not exist; meaning no pitch counted against the batter. Any **intentional** interference of a batted ball by a coach-pitcher will result in a dead ball and the batter is out. This shall be at the discretion of the umpire.

The coach-pitcher must remain in foul territory until the play is stopped and the umpire calls time. The coach-pitcher must not entice a player to throw him/her the ball until the official has called time. If this situation occurs, it will result in the lead runner leaving the base and an out assessed to the team.

## **Base Paths**

All base paths are 60 feet.

## **Participation Rule**

The entire roster of players will be listed in the batting line-up and no player will be benched for more than 1 consecutive inning.

## **Infield Fly Rule**

There is no infield fly rule for this division.

## **Fielding the ball.**

In the past, we have seen teams at the 5-6 level be very successful at making outs by putting their faster players at the 'pitching' position and let them run down kids that are advancing to a base – usually first and home. While this has helped many teams win games, it has done little to prepare kids for 7-8 baseball and beyond. We really want to discourage this. We want the kids to learn the correct defensive play.

So, here is the rule to help develop good fielding habits. If the ball is hit to a player covering a base that a runner is advancing to, they can obviously tag the base or the runner. Other than that, the player needs to throw the ball to the person covering the base. The only time the pitcher can make a tag is if the ball is picked up next to the foul line and the runner has not passed them. If the runner has passed them, they must throw the ball to the person covering the base for the out to count.

### **Example of a play at home:**

If the ball is hit short to the pitcher:

1. If the ball is picked up next to the 3rd base foul line and the runner has not passed them, they may attempt to tag the runner out.
2. If the ball is not near the 3rd base foul line, the pitcher needs to throw the ball to the catcher.
3. If the ball is hit really short, the catcher should be fielding the ball and making the play.

Will this cost the teams some outs and some scores? Most definitely! We know that just throwing and catching the ball for 5-6's is a challenge. We know that there are going to be many balls dropped or thrown over kid's heads. But, as a result of this rule, the kids are going to learn the right play and that is what we want these young players to do. Their catching abilities will improve. Having to teach a 7-8 players to throw the ball instead of running them down is much harder. And when the older player has taken 5 steps chasing the runner to then remember they should have thrown the ball – it is often too late to make the play.

Runners will be called safe if this rule is not followed.

## **Base Advancement**

Base stealing is not allowed.

A batted ball, unless called a foul by the umpire, is live and in play until the defense stops the progress of the lead runner and the umpire calls time. This will be at the umpire's judgment and cannot be appealed. Note: There is no "half way" marks on the field. A player cannot call time. We do not want the kids to hold the ball in the air and call time. We want the kids to learn how to use the baseball to stop the runners. Once time has been called by the official, the ball remains dead until the next batter.

If the ball is hit to a player covering a base that a runner is advancing to, they can obviously tag the base or the runner. Other than that, the player needs to throw the ball to the person covering the base. The only time the pitcher can make a tag is if the ball is picked up next to the foul line and the runner has not passed them. If the runner has passed them, they must throw the ball to the person covering the base for the out to count.

If a ball is thrown away at **any base**, runners may advance 1 base at the risk of being tagged out. Runners may not advance more than one base even if the ball is thrown away a second time.

Baiting throws is not allowed. Once the runner stops his/her progression, the play is over and the ump will call time.

All runners must be in contact with their bases and must not leave their bases until the batter has made contact with the ball. If a runner leaves the base early, the umpire shall address the violation at the time it occurs. The team will receive one team warning. At the second and each additional violation, the runner will leave the field but no out will be assessed. The ball becomes dead immediately. There is no appeal from the coach.

The base runner is out if he/she leaves the baseline to avoid a tag. This is a judgment call by the umpire and cannot be appealed. The base line is 3 feet and is established by the base runner.

The base runner is allowed to 'tag-up' if a fly ball is caught.

Runners must slide feet first at home plate if the catcher is making a tag on the runner. Coaches are encouraged to have their catcher move off the plate if there is not a play to be made at home plate. No head first sliding is allowed at any base. **PENALTY: runner is out.** A dive back is not considered a head first slide.

Runners must avoid 'hard' contact with any defensive player making a tag on that runner. If this occurs, the runner will be called out. This is at the umpire's judgment.

Play is stopped if a player is injured. Time will be called and the advancement of the runners is at the judgment of the umpire.

If a "forced out" is made on the last batter, no runs will be scored. If the final out is not a forced out, all runs scored prior to the out will count.

## **Substitution Rule**

Does not apply since all players bat and are rotated into the field of play.

Speed up rules will be used for the catcher only. The last batter that made an out may run for the catcher at any time. This is not mandatory, but it is encouraged to keep the game moving.

Only one offensive timeout can be called per inning. One defensive timeout may be called per inning during any dead ball situation. Defensive substitutions on the field or from the dugout may occur at the coach's discretion.

## **Equipment**

All batters, runners, and on deck batters must wear helmets at all times. **PENALTY: removal from game for refusal to wear helmet.** Catchers should wear protective equipment: mask, shin guards, chest protector, cup (optional) and catcher's helmet during all practices and games.

Baseball – regular approved hard baseball.

For safety of the player-pitcher, only small barrel bats are to be used. (2 ¼" max). (No big barrel bats are allowed).

## **Outfielders**

Outfielders must start the play at least 10 feet behind the base path. Although this should rarely occur, outfielders are allowed to make a play on the base.

## **Coaches positions**

Offensively, only base coaches and the coach pitcher will take positions on the playing field during a game. The base coaches only may instruct the base runners. The base coaches can not touch the runners when the ball is in play. **PENALTY: The base runner will be call out.** Once the umpire has called time, feel free to congratulate the runners all you want!

Defensively, two coaches may be in the outfield to help instruct their team. They must stay 10 feet behind the base line during play. One additional defensive coach should be with the catcher to keep him/her safe and help get the catcher into position once the ball is in play. To speed-up play, this coach should also toss the ball back to the adult pitcher.