**LAST UPDATED BY PATRICK McCONNELL, APRIL 18, 2014**

Rookie Ball is an important stage in the transition to full-scale baseball.  The rules for playing Rookie Ball in the Bloordale House League shall be the rules of the Ontario Baseball Association, except as where amended by the BBL.

In applying the rules, both the normal rules and our variations, we must remember that these are 8- and 9-year-old children, who in most part are unaware of or just beginning to learn the rules. Some discretion is given to the umpire in terms of assessing intention, who will then ruling accordingly. Coaches should meet before each game to clarify rules and assignments.

**1. Umpires**

The umpire is always provided by the batting team.  This SHOULD be the coach running the pitching machine (please make sure they know the rules). However, another coach may be appointed as umpire.  If another coach is umpire this information must be relayed to the opposing team prior to the start of the inning

* 1st and 3rd base coaches are responsible for calling foul balls.  FOUL should be called loud and clear. If the ball is fair, nothing is said
* Outfielders are encouraged NOT to make unassisted outs on the bases. –ex. Centre fielders should not field the ball and run in and touch second base for a force out.

**2. Batting**

* Batters are allowed **5 good** pitches in which to hit a ball into fair territory. A pitch considered by the umpire to be strike yet not swung at by the batter is considered one of the five good pitches. Likewise, a bad pitch (not considered a strike) that is swung at is also considered one of the 5 good pitches. A bad pitch not swung at is not to be counted as one of the five good pitches. A batter is out if he hits a foul ball on the fifth good pitch.
* On a pitch considered to be strike yet not swung at by the batter, the umpire must call “Pitch” (loud and clear).
* On a pitch not considered a strike, the umpire must call “No Pitch” (loud and clear).
* The coach running the pitching machine must call (loud and clear) “Last Pitch!” on the 5thpitch.
* If a player unintentionally hits any component of the pitching equipment, that player is awarded first base.  Base runners only advance if they are forced.
* If a player hits the coach running the machine, it is considered a dead ball.  That player is awarded first base.  Base runners only advance if they are forced.
* A hit ball that comes to rest in the pitching circle without first coming in contact with a defensive player is immediately called a dead ball. That player is awarded first base.  Base runners only advance if they are forced.
* A hit ball that passes through the pitching circle is considered live.
* Teams can adjust the pitching machine any time during the inning.  It is at the discretion of the batting team.
* The first instance of a thrown bat will result in a team warning being declared to both scorers. For a team having been so warned, a second and subsequent instance of a thrown bat will result in the offending batter(s) being called out. Runners cannot advance on a play where the batter is called out as a result of a thrown bat.
* Bunting is not permitted. Balls that are poorly hit as a result of a full swing, not a bunting motion, are in play.

**3. Base Running**

* Defensive players without the ball (even if they are waiting for the throw) are not allowed to block the base paths or bases.  Runners will be called safe if such obstruction occurs.
* Defensive players have the right to make a play on a ball when standing in the base path. In this situation it is the responsibility of the runner to avoid contact with the infielder. If contact is made, the play should be allowed to come to its natural completion and the offending base runner is called out. If this results in the third out of the inning, no runs will be allowed to count.
* Base runners should be encouraged to avoid collisions with infielders at all times.
* A runner cannot leave the path he is taking to the next base to avoid being tagged out. Judgment should be exercised in determining whether the runner would have definitely been out if he had not moved to avoid the tag. A general rule of thumb is 3 feet (one stride) to either side of the path being taken.
* Sliding is permitted.
* Players are not allowed to lead-off.  This should be called immediately by the umpires or base coaches before the pitch is thrown.  No warning is given for this infraction if caught prior to the pitch.
* The first instance of a lead-off (where the ball is put into play) will result in a team warning being declared to both scorers. For a team having been so warned, a second and subsequent instance of a lead-off will result in the offending runner being called out.
* Runners cannot advance on a play where the runner is either a) given a warning about a leadoff or b) called out as a result of a lead-off.  The ball is considered dead and pitch is thrown again.
* A runner having gained first base cannot be tagged out for over-running the base unless he/she **commits** to advancing towards second base. Even if the runner turns inward in returning to first base, he cannot be tagged out unless he then commits to advancing to second base.
* The ball must be in the hand (or glove) that is making the tag.
* Time is called by the umpire in the following situations:
  + The ball is thrown and the pitcher catches the ball within the 16’ circle (both feet on the line or inside the circle)
  + The ball is thrown toward the pitcher **who is in the circle** and the ball bounces or rolls into the 16’ circle (it can subsequently bounce or roll out).  Time is called immediately when the ball touches the ground within the circle.
  + The ball is thrown toward the pitcher **who is in the circle** and the ball **touches any part of the pitcher** (glove or any part of the body).  Time is call immediately when the ball touches the pitcher.  A ball thrown OVER the 16’ circle (not touched by the pitcher) will be considered an attempt to another fielder and the ball is still live.
  + The ball is thrown and the pitcher catches or picks up the ball and runs it back into the 16’ circle
  + The ball is thrown outside the 16’ circle, but the pitcher who has both feet on the line or within the 16’ circle catches the ball (the ball MUST be caught in this scenario – as it was not thrown within the 16’ circle)
  + When the ball is at rest and neither the offensive or defensive team make any attempt to advance or throw the ball.
* Once time is called, any runner ½ way to the base, is given that base.  Any runner less than ½ way, must go back to the previous base. Discretion and fair play are required by the umpires. If unsure then please ask for assistance from other coaches.
* In the case that one runner is sent back (not ½ way) and another is sent forward (more than ½ way) end up on the same base the runner being sent back takes precedence – resulting in the other runner being sent back as well.
* If the ball comes in contact with any piece of equipment or the umpire during play (other than a hit ball) the umpire must call time and all runners get the base to which they were proceeding.

**4. Mercy Rule / Last Batter**

* A half inning is concluded the sooner of three outs or when 10 batters in the line-up have batted once. Before the last batter not to have hit comes up to bat, the batting team must call “Last Batter”.
* The umpire must call time and the half-inning ended if either of the following occurs:
  + The ball having been hit into play is thrown, handed to or otherwise given to the catcher who subsequently touches/steps on home base. If the defensive team is not using a catcher, then only the pitcher can make this play. Any runs that score before time is called will count.
  + The defensive team make a third out (second and third out or first, second and third out) by normal baseball rules. Run scoring will be determined by normal baseball rules. No runs count if the third out is the result of a force play or failure to tag up on a pop fly.
* The batting rules always apply even during last batter. So if a player strikes out, hits the pitching machine, hits the equipment or umpire, etc. this can end the inning with less than 3 outs.
* The mercy rule is in effect for every inning but the last inning. The last inning this is either the seventh inning, or sooner if the time is being approached, will require 3 outs for each side.

**5. Defaulted Games**

* A game will be considered a default for one or both teams not having **7** players fifteen minutes after the published start time. There are no exceptions.
* If there is a forfeit the players from both teams will be divided up and they will play a fun game.

**6. Player Rotations**

* All players will be equally rotated through every position during the year.
* No Player may sit twice before every other player has had to sit at least once.
* A maximum of 10 players are allowed on the field. Group A includes pitcher, first base, second base, third base and short stop. Group B includes catcher, left field, left-centre field, right field and right-centre field. A player can play no more than 50% of his/her time in Group A or B positions and he/she cannot play more than two innings in any infield position.
* If a team has more than 10 players, Group C is formed. This Group must sit on the bench. There must be an even rotation for all players through Group A, Group B and Group C, as required by the number of players present.
* If a team has only nine players, then they must use only **three** outfielders and a catcher.
* If a team has only eight players, then they can drop the catcher and have home plate covered by the pitcher including ‘last batter’ situations.
* If a team has only seven players, then that team would only have **two** outfielders, they would drop the catcher and have home plate covered by the pitcher including ‘last batter’ situations.

**7. Pitcher’s Circle**

* A circle of 4’ feet in radius must be clearly defined around the pitching machine.
* Defensive players cannot enter, reach into or step into the circle to play a ball.
* If a defensive player enters the circle to play a ball the umpire must immediately call time and all runners are awarded one base.
* A hit ball passing through the circle is in play.
* When a ball comes to rest in the pitcher’s circle after having been touched by the defensive team, the umpire must immediately call time and the runners will be awarded the base to which they are proceeding.

**8. Ball Out of Play**

* When a ball leaves the field of play (ie. goes beyond the end of the screen along first or third base or through the doorways near home plate), the umpire will call time and all runners will be awarded the base they are going to plus one.
* When the ball leaves the field of play during last batter the umpire will call time and ALL base runners will score**.**

**9. Coaches Positioning**

* Defensive coaches cannot be in the field of play and it would be beneficial if they stayed behind and beyond the screen on the first and third base lines.
* Offensive coaches must come no closer than one foot to the first and third base lines and cannot touch, grab or physically control a runner.

**10. Foul Balls**

* The first and third base coaches will call foul balls on their respective side (loud and clear)
* Between home and first or third base, a hit ball entering foul territory is not considered foul until it is touched by a defensive player in foul territory, comes to a full stop in foul territory, hits the screen or a coach. If the ball in this area rolls from foul territory into fair territory before first or third base and before being touched, it is considered fair and in play.
* Beyond first and third base, a ball landing in foul territory is foul and ball landing fair and rolling into foul territory is fair.

**11. Protests**

* It is important to make calls that are fair, consistent and the result of good judgment.
* Coaches are encouraged to discuss quietly and respectfully and hopefully resolve any call that is in dispute.
* If the matter cannot be resolved, the game should be finished and a protest must be submitted to the convenor within 24 hours.

**12. Player Positioning**

* The pitcher can be no closer to home plate than the 4’ “pitcher line”.  Both feet must be on this line.
* Infielders other than the pitcher must be behind the base line when the ball is being pitched.
* Outfielders can be no closer to home plate than the edge of the grass when the ball is being pitched.

**13. Helmets**

* If a base runner loses his helmet while running the bases, time should be called immediately
* If this occurs with the batter and he has not safely reached 1st base, time is immediately called and the pitch is replayed.
* If this occurs with any base runner (including the batter who has safely reached 1st base), time is immediately called and runners are give the base they are going to if past ½ way or returned to the previous base if less than ½ way.
* If the player intentionally removes his helmet during play, time is immediately called and the offending runner is call out.  Players are returned to the previous bases.

**14. Game Timing**

* Games are to be 2 hours in length.
* Teams cannot begin an inning after 1:40
* Coaches should meet prior to 1:40 to determine the number of innings they can reasonably expect to complete leaving one full inning to play (the last inning) in which the mercy rule will not apply. The last inning must be an inning without the mercy rule being in effect. Each team must make three outs (unless the home team is winning after the top half of the inning).

**15. Players Hit by the Ball**

* A runner who allows a hit ball to come in contact with him/her while not on a base is out.
* Once a hit ball has been fielded, and the contact with the ball is incidental, the ball remains in play, the runner continues to advance and all other baseball rules continue to apply.
* A runner injured by a thrown ball will get the base to which he was advancing.
* A runner going out of his way/moving off the base path to invite contact with the ball will be called out.

**16. Scoring**

* If a third out in a half inning is the result of a force play or failure to tag up after a caught fly ball any runs that score during that play do not count.
* If a third out is not the result of a force play then only the runners who touch home plate before the third out is made are counted. Runners have to touch home plate.

**17. Results**

Both must notify the convenor within **24hrs** of the game.  Failure to do so will result in the losing team winning by forfeit 7-0. [Rookie@bloordalebaseball.com](mailto:Rookie@bloordalebaseball.com)

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