

Baseball Manitoba **Grand Slam Coaches Information**



Grand Slam Program

Grand Slam is the official 9U program for Baseball Manitoba and Tim Horton's is a provincial sponsor of the Program. Tim Horton's provides players uniform tops, Tim Hortons hats and medals. This Baseball Canada Program is designed to develop skills in our young players by reducing team sizes and encouraging touches of the baseball through practice and game situations. The Grand Slam Program is designed to promote physical development of children through the game of baseball. The program helps develop physical literacy by using a modified game to teach the basic baseball skills to children and ensure success. The program is designed for children of eight and nine and consists of four categories of activity fit into two seasons. Sticker books and stickers are available for teams. These must be requested through the Baseball Manitoba Office.

Grand Slam Goals

1. Create a healthy environment in which children of various levels of ability find pleasure in learning baseball
2. Initiate or pursue the development of basic baseball skills and strategies for players
3. Teach and develop sportsmanship in a context of healthy competition
4. Develop and promote self-esteem in children

Long-Term Athlete Development

The LTAD plan identifies 7 stages in respect to the athletes physical, mental, and emotional development. Rookie aged baseball players are in stage 2, which is the **FUNDamentals** stage of the LTAD plan. Coaches are reminded that children at this level need to participate in activities that develop basic skills. These activities need to maintain a focus on fun, and formal competition should only be minimally introduced.

→ MAIN GOAL

To develop fundamental movement and basic baseball skills in a fun environment.

Technical aspects covered:

Fundamentals in:

- hitting
- running
- receiving
- throwing
- + Agility, balance, coordination and speed

SUMMARY **Stage 2**

Children require a structured, fun and stimulating environment in this stage that focuses on developing the ABC's of athleticism (agility, balance, coordination and speed), hand-eye coordination and basic baseball specific skills. Programs must be developed that keep their interest and promote a feel for the sport without any focus on structured competition. Children should be introduced to simple rules and ethics as well as encouraged to cooperate within a group environment

LTAD Recommendations

Here is a review of the LTAD recommendations as described by Baseball Canada for youngster aged 8 & 9 years old:

- Length of the season: 8 to 12 weeks
- Ratio of practices / competition: 70% practices, 30% games
- 1 to 2 hours a week for a period of 8 to 12 weeks including camps
- Parents/Coaches act as umpires
- No official scorekeepers
- Use of a pitching machine or a parent/coach acting as a pitcher
- At this stage, children should participate in a great variety of sports activities each week
- Game format: 6 vs. 6
- All players have equal playing time and experiment by playing all positions

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Grand Slam Guidelines

1. The suggested amount of players in the field is six. One per infield position. It is suggested to change positions each inning. A team is allowed more players in the field if they wish.

Purpose: This should allow each player more chances to play the ball and players focus will improve because of the increased action.

2. The inning is considered complete when all batters have come to the plate. If a team has more than 6 players, a maximum of 8 may bat each inning. The batting order should be changed each inning. The amount of players called out in an inning has no relevance on when the inning is considered complete. When the final at bat of the inning is over, players are encouraged to be in position to start the next inning within 30 seconds.

Purpose: Will provide routine to the length of inning to allow kids to remain focussed in the field. Takes pressure off kids worried about "getting out". Encourages hustle off and on the field.

3. Each batter will receive a standard baseball count from the pitcher (coach). (4 balls or 3 strikes) If either a walk or a strikeout occurs a tee is brought to home plate and the batter hits off the tee. It is very important to not keep pitching to the batter once they have reached their limit. This causes the game to slow down for all the other players causing boredom and loss of attention.

Purpose: Will remove disappointment of striking out and walking back to the dugout. Will allow coaches to "pitch to the ability" of the player without the worry of striking the batter out. Will keep the game going at a quick pace to maintain focus for players.

TEE PLACEMENT- Most Tees are made incorrectly, with the ball in the middle of the plate.

The ball should be placed on the front of homeplate, so the batters are hitting the ball out in front of the plate.

4. Defensive outs are not tallied as all batters bat each inning, but players that are put out must return to their dugout.

Purpose: To teach players what an out is (defensive strategy) and proper baserunning.

5. Baserunners do not advance on overthrows.

Purpose: Will promote players to throw to the correct base. Players will learn defensive strategy not "throw it back to the pitcher". Will also teach baserunning skills as the players are not just running wildly around the bases.

6. The score may be recorded if desired, but results will not be sent in to the league and standings will not be kept.

7. The game has a time limit of 1 hour. The game is considered complete when the first half inning is completed after the one hour limit. Ex. The game started 6:45. The top of the 4th is completed at 7:50. The game is considered over.

Purpose: There is no need for the bottom of the inning, as the score is not being recorded. This keeps the game time in line with the suggested levels for kids this age and allows the opposing team to return home at a decent time.

8. The BlueFlame pitching machine is used to pitch to players. Coaches may also throw if needed (it is suggested to throw overhand from a one knee down position). Distance from the batter can vary dependant on batter ability.

9. Coaches may be in the field of play for organizational purposes.

10. Defensive changes are unlimited. Coaches are encouraged to have their players play a different position in each inning of play. Players may change every batter if preferred (not the catcher). Catchers should be dressed and ready to be on the field as soon as their team is done hitting. (have your catcher bat first in the inning before he goes in the field to speed things up)

11. The game is played with a softer version of a baseball. Recommended:: Rawlings ROTB1.

12. Infield fly rule is not used.

Purpose: Grand Slam aged players would not understand the concept of the infield fly rule. Therefore, teach kids to run when the ball is on the ground and stay when a ball is caught in the air.

13. No bunting or stealing. If players attempts either one, explain the rule to them. (An out or a strike should not be recorded for these infractions.)

14. Game times are determined by your league. Coaches are suggested to have at least two Grand Slam sessions (½ hour prior practice prior to 1 hour game) per week, plus an additional practice time. Coaches are welcome to schedule their own exhibition games.

15. All coaches and managers should review the summary of the Baseball Canada Long Term Athlete Development recommendations in the Grand Slam and the Pursuit of Physical Literacy Handbook.

16. Three coaches per team is strongly recommended. At least one coach is required to be Initiation Trained, and all coaches need Initiation on-line, along with Respect in Sport.

17. The Baseball Manitoba Grand Slam Jamborees are scheduled for Saturday, June 9. Please contact your league convener to confirm the date of your event. The Jamboree is based on participation and is not a championship. Your league representative for the Baseball Manitoba provincial Grand Slam Jamboree (Saturday, June 30 at Shaw Park) will be randomly selected.