



9U DIVISION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

Baseball Manitoba's 9U Division is designed to introduce young athletes to baseball in a safe, structured, and development-focused environment. These recommended rules aim to maximize participation, promote physical literacy, and ensure a positive experience for players, coaches, and parents.

These guidelines are intended for use by all member associations. They are written to be clear and accessible for families while providing consistent direction for on-field implementation.



PHILOSOPHY

The 9U Division emphasizes:

- Skill development over competition
- Equal participation and engagement for all players
- Age-appropriate rules, equipment, and field dimensions
- Fun, confidence building, and sportsmanship

This division is designed for players aged 8 and 9 and serves as a foundational step in long-term athlete development within baseball.

GOALS

1

Create a healthy, inclusive environment where players of all ability levels enjoy learning baseball

2

Introduce and develop fundamental baseball skills and basic team strategies

3

Teach sportsmanship within a context of respectful and healthy competition

4

Build confidence and promote self-esteem in young athletes



PLAYER & TEAM STRUCTURE

Age Division: 8-9 years old

Roster Size: 8-10 players per team

Defensive Alignment

- **Standard Positions (9 players):** P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, CF, RF
- **Modifications:**
 - Teams may remove the pitcher or play with 2 outfielders if fewer than 9 players are available
 - A 4th outfielder may be added if more than 9 players are available
- **Player Rotation**
 - All players should rotate through defensive positions every 1-2 innings
 - The intent is to ensure equal opportunity and eliminate extended bench time

SEASON & SCHEDULING

Season Length: 8-12 weeks

Game Length:

- 6 innings or 1.5 hours, whichever occurs first
- A 30-minute pre-game warm-up is recommended

Practice-to-Game Ratio: 1 practice and 2 games per week



FIELD DIMENSIONS

Base Paths: 60 feet

Pitching Machine Distance: 40-42 feet

EQUIPMENT & FIELD SETUP

Official Game Ball

- Rawlings ROTB1 is the official game ball for the 9U Division

Pitching

- Pitching machine only; Louisville Blue or Black Flame machines are recommended
- Recommended speed: 30-35 MPH (50-60 km/h)
- Coaches may adjust speed to best allow for safe and consistent contact

Field Setup

- A square screen or net should be placed behind the catcher to limit passed balls
- 2 ball buckets are recommended:
 - 1 at the pitching machine
 - 1 beside the catcher



Player Equipment

Each player should provide their own:

- Bat
- Helmet
- Glove
- Required protective equipment

Team Equipment

Teams should provide:

- Baseballs
- Batting Tee
- Catcher's equipment
- Additional helmets and bats for shared use

Facility Equipment

Facilities should provide:

- Pitching machine
- Bases
- Bow net or square screen

GAME PLAY RULES

Innings & Runs

- 3 outs per inning
- Maximum of 5 runs per inning



Batting

- All players bat in the lineup
- Teams are encouraged to change the batting order each game

Pitch Count per At-Bat

- Each batter receives a maximum of 5 hittable pitches
- If the batter does not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, they may:
 - Hit from a tee, or
 - Receive an underhand toss from their coach

Base Running & Live Ball

- No walks or hit-by-pitch
- No bunting
- No stealing
- No infield fly rule
- Runners may advance 1 base on an overthrow
- Runners may not advance on passed balls

Dead Ball Situations

- When a batted ball reaches the outfield, play is declared dead once a defensive player has control of the ball in the infield
 - Runners more than halfway to the next base advance
 - Runners less than halfway return to the previous base
 - Close calls favor the runner
- If a batted ball contacts the pitching machine:
 - The ball is declared dead
 - The batter is awarded a single
 - All runners advance 1 base



CATCHER & PITCHING MACHINE PROCEDURES

- Catchers do not throw the ball back to the pitcher
- Catchers place the ball in the bucket beside them
- A coach replaces the bucket as needed

GAME ADMINISTRATION

Scorekeeping

- No official score is kept or recorded
- Scorebooks are provided for training purposes to track:
 - The 5-run limit per inning
 - Batting order

Umpiring

- A coach from the defensive team calls players safe or out on the bases, rules on fair or foul balls, decides runner advancements, and can stop play for safety



COACHES & VOLUNTEERS

Minimum Staffing

- 1 Head Coach
- 1 Assistant Coach

Coaching Requirements

- **Head Coach**
 - Respect in Sport
 - Understanding the Rule of Two
 - Coach Initiation in Sport
 - Coach Initiation in Baseball
 - Fundamentals of Coaching Baseball Clinic (recommended)
- **Assistant Coaches**
 - Respect in Sport
 - Understanding the Rule of Two



ON-FIELD ADULT POSITIONS

Coaches may be positioned on the field to assist with play in the following roles:

- Operating the pitching machine
- Positioned behind home plate to retrieve passed balls
- Positioned in the outfield to help direct players
- Coaching at first base and third base to direct runners

RULE MODIFICATIONS

Local associations may implement additional modifications to better meet the needs of their participants, provided player safety and development remain the priority.

Examples include:

- Smaller teams with no outfielders
 - Coaches in the outfield to retrieve balls
 - Rules for balls that get passed the infield (e.g., automatic double or home run)
- Tiering teams by age (e.g., minor/major) and/or skill level

All other standard Baseball Manitoba and youth league participation rules apply unless otherwise modified above.

