



## **Mosquito Rules of Play**

1. 60 foot bases
2. The pitching mound will be 44 feet from home plate
3. Mosquito House League players can pitch no more than 50 pitches or 3 innings in one game.
4. Pitchers are not permitted to pitch in 2 consecutive games (regardless of the time between games, this give more player the opportunity to pitch)
5. Pitchers are not permitted to throw 3 consecutive days in a row.
6. Pitchers shall be permitted to have 2 appearances in the same calendar day but not in consecutive games. The official scorekeeper (coaches) will calculate the total pitches thrown for that calendar day and determine the required rest starting the next calendar day. Players must not exceed the maximum pitch count total for that day.
7. Pitchers will be permitted to finish the batter if his/her maximum pitch limit has been reached for that calendar day.
8. 1 to 20 pitches – no rest required.
9. 21-30 pitches – one day rest required.
10. 31-40 pitches – two days rest required.
11. 41-50 pitches – three days rest required.
13. No breaking ball will be permitted.
14. Catcher can not pitch and catch during the same game.
15. Game start time is 6:30 (league play)
16. All players bat, regardless of playing a defensive role or not
17. Max of 9 players in the field
18. Three outs or 6 runs per inning max, all innings
19. To keep in the spirit of good sportsmanship and to maintain the intent of this league all games will be played even if one team is short players. If a team has less than 7 players, that team will forfeit the opportunity to win the game. It is however our intent that the other team will then lend players to even up the two teams and a game will be played anyway and umps will be paid. If a team can only field 7 players the game will be played as scheduled, but again good sportsmanship must be considered. The team with more players can assist the team that is short by offering to take

defensive positions for them when they are in the field, but will bat in normal order with their own team. Teams have till 5 minutes after the scheduled start time to have their players there and ready to play

21. Scores will be kept during games.
22. **If a batter is pitched four balls they will not walk. A coach from the batting team will then pitch a Maximum of four balls to his player to give them an opportunity to hit. If after the fourth pitch the batter has not made contact with the ball that batter will be called out. If the batter foul tips the last pitch they will be given an additional pitch(ONLY THE LAST PITCH). No walks will be issued. This rule is place to help encourage the kids to hit the ball. AS well this is the first time a lot the players are pitching for the first time, and throwing strike may be difficult. The Association understands WALKS are a part of the game but at this level we want to give every kid an opportunity to hit the ball.**
23. No lead offs or stealing until the pitch has crossed home plate.
24. If game has completed 3 innings and stopped due to rain darkness then the game is considered complete. (During a tournament there is 2 hour time slot and no new inning may start after 1 hr and 45min after the start of the game)
25. When a team has extra players, please ensure that players are subbed equally. No player shall sub 2 Consecutive innings.
26. Mercy runners allowed and must be the last player out.
27. Tournament games can not end with in a tie.
28. In the event of a tie the International Tie Breaker Rule is in effect( **Tournaments ONLY!**)
29. All diamonds are to be left clean after each game.
30. Free substitutions allowed at any time in all positions. Once a pitcher leaves that position he can not go back as a pitcher.
31. Winning team has to report the score to the convener via email [houseleague@fmmba.ca](mailto:houseleague@fmmba.ca)  
Please keep copy of all score sheets in case there is a discrepancy.

**If the temperature is not +5 or above according to the weather channel an hour before the game the game will be postponed.**



## Mosquito Coaches Initiatives

Hi and welcome to Mosquito baseball my name is Andrew Swaggers and I am going to provide you with a guideline to teaching basic fundamentals for Mosquito age ballplayers. First of all before we get going I just want to say thank you for committing to helping out the players, our association and the wonderful sport of baseball. It is because of people like you that this sport will continue to thrive in the wood buffalo region. You are a very important factor as to how much a child is going to enjoy his/her baseball experience. The goal is to provide every participant with a positive baseball experience with the hope that they will want to continue to play on a yearly basis. How do we achieve that goal? By making the experience a fun, positive one and teaching basic proper fundamentals so the players can see improvement. Anyone who is in this type of atmosphere usually enjoys themselves. If you have never coached before we have practice plans in place and will do everything we can to help make your own experience a positive one.

### Basic Fundamentals

The following are basic fundamentals that every player needs to learn and will use for as long as they play the game. At the beginning of the season use all 4 steps once they are all doing this well you can eventually eliminate steps 1 and 2.

**Throwing:** It is very important to try and teach proper throwing fundamentals at a young age so that the players develop the right habits. At this level most of your players have been playing the game for a while and have developed habits either good ones or some that if they would like to play at a competitive level down the road will need to change ASAP. The following is back to the very basics for most but should be done at the very beginning of the season to make sure everyone understands the concepts.

1. Get the players to start off on 1 knee the same knee as the hand they throw with. All they are going to do is simply flip the ball to their partner who will only be 3 to 4 feet away. The focus is to create good backspin on the ball and keep their throwing elbow

even or above their shoulder. Try and throw the ball to their partners' chest. This will be done without gloves. (2-3 minutes)

2. Staying on the same knee get them to put their gloves on. Now have them start with the hands together, take the ball out of the glove pushing the ball away from the body, point the glove towards the target and throwing the ball to their partners' chest. Try and make sure that the hand and ball are making somewhat of a circular motion from original start point to release point. Once again make sure they are keeping the throwing elbow even or above the shoulder and not pushing the ball or working underneath it. (2-3 minutes)
3. Stand the players up and back up to where they can still play controlled catch. The one throwing the ball will start off sideways with his/her feet wide enough so that he/she can deliberately transfer his/her bodyweight from leg to leg. Start with the hand and ball in the glove, rock the weight back while taking the hand and ball out away from the body and pointing the glove to the target, shift weight as you come around and throw. Same fundamentals as on the one knee with the arm action only now we have our hips and lower half involved. (2-3 minutes)
4. Back the up a little, start off with feet shoulder width apart facing partner sideways. Lift the front leg separate the hands and step towards the target and throw. Emphasis on the same fundamentals as the previous 3 steps but now we are putting the entire package together. (2-3 minutes)
5. For the longer throws it is important that the players begin to gain ground towards their target. Take 3 steps for example a right hander would begin by taking a step with the left foot, then right and then left and throw. This creates momentum and usually results in a more powerful throw.

**Catching:** As well as throwing we want to teach the proper fundamentals in the catching department to create good habits that will stick with the players. The best way to enforce these habits is to have small groups giving the players a lot of repetitions and attention. Make sure the players always start with the knees slightly bent and hands are thumb to thumb. The general rule is that when the ball is above the waist we want to catch it with the fingers up and below the waist fingers down.

1. Using the soft stitch ball begin with using bare hands. Try to teach the players to catch the baseball with their fingers up and having the glove hand as the backstop and the throwing hand as the trapper. A lot of young players want to try and catch everything

with the palm up instead of palm towards their partner. Start off nice and close and throw simple underhand tosses towards their chest. Make sure they keep their eyes on the ball and use the hand to stop the ball. If the throw is around waist high get them to bend their knees and catch with fingers up, if it is lower then we catch with fingers down. Once they have done a good job with their bare hands then we can move on to using gloves. For some Mosquito age players this will be very simple but we must stress the importance of doing this correctly.

2. We will now use the gloves and do the exact same thing making sure they focus on keeping the palm out and fingers up, remembering that the glove is the back stop and the hand is the trapper.
3. If they understand the concept of catching with two hands but they are still mostly catching with the palm up it is a good idea to try the following. Have 2 players stand towards each other about 5-7 feet apart. They will put their throwing hand behind their back and flip a ball back and forth catching the ball with their fingers on top and palm facing away. Have them pretend their hand is on a steering wheel if the ball is towards their backhand they must make the adjustment and catch the ball with the fingers facing out and likewise to their forehand. This can also be worked on in small circles and mini competitions can be incorporated.

**Groundballs:** Fielding groundballs for most at the Mosquito level is a fairly easy task. However we need to make sure that all of the players are on the same page and understand the proper fundamentals . This can be done with partners as the coach walks around or in small groups. Have a strong emphasis on triangle position between feet and point of contact, bending the knees, using 2 hands (alligator) and being aggressive towards the target once ball is fielded. Make sure your players start in an athletic position prior to the ball being rolled, they must have a ready position and consistently get into it prior to the ball being hit.

1. No gloves, have them roll the ball back and forth using 2 hands and focusing on the alligator position with the hands eating the ball. The hand that the glove usually goes on will be the hand closest to the body with palm facing out (bottom of alligator mouth). The other hand will be the top of the alligator mouth. If the ball is a little to the side have them shuffle and field the ball in the middle of their body with their chins down. (3-4 minutes)
2. Gloves on same hand as without gloves except now they are a little farther apart and will focus on having an eye in their glove from start point and not taking the eye off the ball. Have them imagine that the eye is in the middle of their palm and that they can't

take the eye off the ball. This will eliminate flipping the glove down which is a bad habit for a lot of players. By now most players at the mosquito level have developed the habit of flipping the glove and will have to work hard at doing it the proper way. (2-3 minutes)

3. Have them in a couple of groups and roll each one a ball, they will field the ball down out in front and come up making a throw back to you. Give them each a lot of reps stressing the importance of doing it with the proper technique. (4-5 minutes)

**Flyballs:** This should be fairly easy for most of the peewee age players. You will have some ball players that are new to baseball and will have to take them back to the basics. Most young players want to catch the ball away from their heads with their palm facing up. Just as we talked about at the beginning the important thing to stress here is palm out and fingers up. Back stop (glove) and trapper (hand). You will have a variety of different calibre players at this age level. Some you will have to challenge more than others and it will be easy to know who these are. For the more advanced make them run and catch or you will lose their attention.

1. Form small groups and start them off with their gloves on nice and close. Underhand flip balls to them emphasizing the fundamentals that we have talked about. As they get better and more confident you can start throwing the balls higher up. Make sure they use 2 hands and get their body underneath the ball. (5-10 minutes)

**Pitching:** Pitching is a challenging part of coaching Mosquito baseball as it is the first time that they get to pitch. The only thing that can be done from a coaching perspective is to give the players the best information possible to allow them to have success. The key to pitching at this level is simply to be able to throw strikes. Make sure your players understand that it doesn't matter how hard they throw as long as they throw strikes. Young ball players have it in their mind that they need to strike everybody out and they think that it isn't good when someone makes contact. Let them know that they have 7 players behind them and they want to be involved in the action as well. How do we teach them to throw strikes? We need to make sure that whenever they throw a ball that they are doing it with a purpose and to focus on what they are trying to accomplish. Throwing strikes is all about being able to repeat a consistent delivery. Working on body control and balance is a good way to help create a consistent delivery. Make sure that your players all get the opportunity to pitch during the season if they would like to and that they work on it in practice. Pitchers at this level should be throwing off the mound at least twice a week whether it is in a game situation or not they need to get consistent work.

**Hitting:** Hitting for the majority of baseball players in this age category is the favourite part of their game. Instilling proper fundamentals at a young age usually leads to success which keeps the player interested in the game. I want to provide you with some insight on the proper swing:

Every hitter's swing must have a coil (gather and load), a stride (ready to transfer weight), hip rotation while pulling the hands through, and finish all while trying to maintain balance and being efficient and in control. This obviously takes a lot of practice and some good guidance which is where we come in to play as coaches. Not only do we have to try and provide knowledge of proper hitting mechanics but we also need to help each individual develop a mindset that works for them. Some hitters are at their best when there is absolutely no pressure and some thrive off of it. We need to make the hitter understand that the only pressure that exists is the one that he/she puts on him/herself. He/she needs to find which state he/she is most successful in and create that every time he/she is at the plate. Hitting like every other part of this game is about confidence and that is something as coaches that we can all play a big role in developing into our players.

1. Spread your players out each with a bat and helmet. Show them how to properly grip the bat by lining up their knocking knuckles. Grip the bat loose and be relaxed, face the "T" with feet shoulder width apart and bat head facing up. In order to hit the ball hard they will need to get extension with the arms, bat and transfer their weight. Get them to take swings and take them through the correct path to the ball. We want them to lead with the knob of the bat keeping the hands close to the body and taking the shortest path to the ball. Have them swing down towards the ball and not upwards. They should focus on hitting the ball as hard as possible on a line and not upwards. Once they have worked on this we can lead them to the T's. (3-4 minutes)
2. Have 2 to 3 players per T and work on swinging down to the ball trying to make contact with the arms extended and keeping their eyes on the ball at point of contact. Make sure they are getting their entire body involved in the process, rotating their hips as they transfer weight to hit the ball. Work on everything that we have discussed and stay positive with the players. (Have the players hit 3 to 4 balls in a row and rotate within their group for up to 8 minutes.)
3. We want to make sure the mosquito players are implementing the load and weight transfer. Get behind a screen and simply underhand pitches to your hitter no more than 15 feet away. Make sure you are deliberate about taking your hand back before you come forward and be consistent with this. Your hitter will use this as a timing

device and as you go back with your hand your hitter will be getting his/her load. This is an easy and effective way for you to see if they are transferring weight and getting loaded. Throw 5-6 pitches in a row and rotate within the group. (6-7 minutes)

4. The goal is for them to make solid contact and have the approach of hitting the ball up the middle. At this age level a lot of young players get in the habit of pulling the ball as they think they can hit it further. If we can have them focus on using the big part of the field and hit the ball where it's pitched the players will enjoy a lot of success as they continue to play the game.

**Baserunning:** Teaching baserunning is probably the easiest out of the fundamentals that we have gone over but equally important. We need to make sure that the players understand the rules and what it takes to properly run the bases.

1. Take the players through the proper route to every base. Once they have hit the ball they need to run as fast as they can to 1<sup>st</sup> base and touch the middle front part of the bag. Show them that they are allowed to run through the bag and break it down after. Explain to them why this is allowed and that if there is an over throw they can proceed to the next base at their or the coaches discretion.
2. Teach your players to be aggressive on the bases. At this age level there will be a lot of passed balls by the catcher and the players will be able to take a lot of bases. It is very important that we teach the proper technique to sliding feet first. When sliding they must hook either the left or right foot underneath the other leg and keep their hands in the air. If they slide with their hands on the dirt they will get shale in their hands or rip up their batting gloves.

**Player Management:** In order to have an enjoyable experience for yourself and for your players you must have control of your team. One of the most important things to teach a young ballplayer is respect for his teammates, his coach and the game. There will always be some that are going to be more interested than others but it is very important that they understand that they need to respect one another and a big part of that is listening to their coach. The more they pay attention as a group the more fun they are going to have. Discipline is a part of all sports and will have to happen at times if certain individuals continue to disrupt the group. It is very important to have a meeting with all parents at the beginning of the season to go over your season objectives. You definitely can use as much help as possible and think it's a good idea to address that early. Practices run a lot smoother when



there are more hands helping, however in saying that you are the head coach and everyone needs to understand that. At this age group it is very important that every player gets an equal opportunity to try every position. Winning is always fun but not as important as development at this stage.

## **Conclusion**

By following these basic fundamentals you will be providing your players with the proper techniques to becoming a better ball player. However the most important part of this experience is for the players to have fun and enjoy a positive experience. If at any time you have questions please feel free to contact me at [inquiries@fmmba.ca](mailto:inquiries@fmmba.ca) . Thanks for taking the time. Good luck and PLAY BALL!



## Mosquito Practice Plan # 1

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### 0:00-0:10 Stretch and active warm up

Start down the right or left field line have the kids run to the centerfield fence and back as a group. Take them through the stretch and active warm up routine.

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### 0:10-0:30 Throwing

Throwing will be done in organized fashion down either the right or left field line. Start them off close and slowly back them up to where they are throwing to their maximum distance while still maintaining control and bring them back in. Challenge them to have competitions against their partner. (ex: game of 21: the head is worth 2 points, chest 3 and waist 1, they keep score and first one to 21 points is the winner) **Always have strong emphasis on proper throwing fundamentals.**

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### 0:30-1:00 Infielding/Outfielding

Split the team into two groups. One group will be in the infield with one coach and the other in the outfield with the other coach. After 15 minutes the groups will switch.

**Infielding-** Have one player at 1B and the rest at SS, coach will roll baseballs from the middle of the diamond (mound) to players. They will use proper fielding fundamentals to field the groundball and make a throw across the diamond to the player at 1B. Player at 1B will drop the balls behind the bag once the coach runs out of balls players will pick them up and someone else becomes the first baseman. The purpose of this is to give every player an opportunity to field a lot of groundballs in a short period of time. Good idea to incorporate a competition towards the end. If a mistake is made the player is out last one standing is the winner. Mistake can be a bad throw or improper fielding technique resulting in the ball getting by the fielder.

**Outfielding-** Start up with one line of 6 and throw a fly ball to player in front. They will call and catch the ball and throw it back to coach. Once they have their turn they will head to back of the line and wait for their turn again. As they get better coach can challenge the players by making them go further to catch the ball. Work both sides and front/back. Towards the end competition is a good idea basically the same as in infielding the player is out if a mistake is made.

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### 1:00-1:20 Hitting

Divide the team into 3 groups; hitters/infielders/outfielders. Hitters will be around home plate, one at a time in the batter's box, coach will throw 6 pitches to the hitter which will focus on hitting the ball hard and up the middle. The group will rotate in and out and will get 4 turns each. Infielders will be fielding balls hit by the hitters and throwing them to the bucket guy which will be coach # 2. Outfielders will field the balls hit to the them and also throw the batted balls to the bucket guy. Groups will rotate from hitting, to outfielding, to infielding. Goal is to get as many quality swings in as possible within the 6 minute time frame.

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### **1:20-1:30 Cleanup and Baserunning**

Have the players cleanup and comb the park for any baseballs and put them in the bucket should only take a couple minutes. Have them line up at home plate and all run through 1<sup>st</sup> base 3 times, from home to second twice and home to home twice.



## Mosquito Practice Plan # 2

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### **0:00-0:10 Stretch and active warm up**

Start down the right or left field line have the kids run to the centerfield fence and back as a group. Take them through the stretch and active warm up routine.

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### **0:10-0:25 Throwing**

Throwing will be done in organized fashion down either the right or left field line. Start them off close and slowly back them up to where they are throwing to their maximum distance while still maintaining control and bring them back in. Have the players play speed catch. The partner which is on the foul line will start with the ball, they have to throw to their partner and back 5 times, first team that does this is the winner. **Always have strong emphasis on proper throwing fundamentals.**

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### **0:25-0:50 Infielding/Outfielding**

Have your players go to their position of choice but focusing making sure you have a player in every position except for the pitcher. Take them through the infield outfield routine.

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### **0:50-1:20 Hitting/Pitching 15 mins per group**

#### **Hitting**

Divide the hitting group into 2 groups; hitters/shaggers. Hitters will be around home plate, one at a time in the batter's box, coach will throw 8 pitches to each hitter. Round 1 will be 2 bunts followed by 2 hit and runs followed by 4 swings. Round 2 will be 2 hit and runs followed by 2 hits to the opposite field followed by 4 swings. Round 3 and 4 will be 2 to the opposite field followed by 8 swings. The group hitting will rotate in and out until 7 minutes is up and then will switch with the shaggers.

#### **Pitching**

This can be done down either the left or right field line. First of all talk to your players about the importance of throwing strikes and that it comes from repeating a consistent delivery. Have your players line up on the foul line and work on their delivery making sure they are in control and have good balance throughout. Once they all have an idea have them pair up (equal ability) and pitch to each other on flat ground. The idea will be

to work on their delivery throwing as many strikes as possible and not focusing on throwing hard. Have 1 group throw for about 5 minutes followed by the other for the last 5 minutes.

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### **1:20-1:30 Cleanup and Baserunning**

Have the players cleanup and comb the park for any baseballs and put them in the bucket should only take a couple minutes. Have them line up at home plate and all run through 1<sup>st</sup> base 3 times, from home to second twice and home to home twice.



## Mosquito Practice Plan # 3

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### **0:00-0:10 Stretch and active warm up**

Have the kids meet at home plate and jog around the bases twice. Take them through the stretch and active warm up routine down either the right or left field line.

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### **0:10-0:25 Throwing Program**

Have them throw down either the left or right field line starting off by having the weight on their opposite leg transferring it back to the back leg and then back to the front leg as they throw the ball. This is a great way to create rhythm as they throw the ball. As they get loose back them up and make sure they are gaining ground towards their partner and using their legs to throw the ball. They should back up to where it is difficult to get the ball to their partner. By challenging themselves in this manner they will build arm strength. Bring them back in and finish up by playing a game of spots with their partner or quick hands. Make sure they understand the concept of throwing every ball with a purpose.

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### **0:25-0:50 Team Defence**

In order to become a good team they will have to learn how to communicate and take care of the baseball. Have your team go to their position making sure every position is covered including the pitcher. Explain to them that every player should be moving on every ball that is hit. It may be to cover a throw or a base. Play a game of outs and see how many plays in a row your team can make. You will hit the ball from home plate and prior to every ball you hit yell out the situation. For example man on 2<sup>nd</sup> 1 out, hit a groundball between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to the left fielder, if he comes up with it clean he should be throwing the ball in towards home and the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman is the cut off man. If the catcher decides that the runner coming home would be safe he can yell cut 2 which will keep the runner who hit the ball at 1<sup>st</sup> base and the double play in order. There is a ton of different scenarios that can be played out during this team defence and is a great way to learn about what to do with the baseball. Make sure there is a lot of communication going on between the players as to what to do with the ball.

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### **0:50-1:25 Hitting/Shagging/Pitching**

**(groups will rotate through the 3 stations for about 10 minutes each)**

**Hitting-** Hitting will be done on the field and follow the same format as practice plan # 2.

**Shagging-** Shaggers will be scattered on the field and fielding live balls hit from the hitters.

**Pitching-** Pitchers will be in the bullpen working with a coach off the bullpen mound. Emphasis will be repeating the delivery and throwing strikes. Rotate the pitchers within the group so everyone gets an equal opportunity to throw off the mound. The pitchers who are not throwing off the mound should be working on their delivery doing the towel drill.

**1:25-1:30 Practice wrap up**

Clean up balls, jog around the entire diamond once as a group. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.

## Mosquito – Tournament Only

Start to End of League Season	LOW		MEDIUM LOW		MEDIUM		MEDIUM HIGH		HIGH		Max.
	# of pitches	Rest	# of Pitches	Rest	# of Pitches	Rest	# of Pitches	Rest	# of Pitches	Rest	# of pitches
	1 - 20	None	21 - 30	1 day	31 - 44	2 days	45 - 54	3 days	55 - 70	4 days	70

**Based on an average of 20 pitches per inning**

1	Coaches must follow the pitch Count Regulations.
2	Pitchers are <b>not</b> permitted to throw 3 consecutive days in a row.
3	Pitchers shall be permitted to have 2 appearances in the same calendar day. The official scorekeeper will calculate the total pitches thrown for that calendar day and determine the required rest starting the next calendar day. Athletes must <b>not</b> exceed the maximum pitch count total for that day.
4	Players will <b>not</b> be permitted to pitch and catch in the same game
5	Pitchers will be permitted to finish the batter if his or her maximum pitch limit has been reached for that calendar day. You must then take the absolute number of pitches previous to the maximum for that day and apply the required rest. If a pitcher has 2 appearances in that day then take the cumulative total from the LOW category required to be able to pitch again the same day and add it to the existing pitches to reach the maximum number of pitches.

### ***Pitch count examples:***

Game 1: John throws 19 pitches which is in the LOW category allowing him to pitch again in the same day.

Game 2: John may pitch in Game 2 of on the same day, but may not start a new batter after 51 pitches are thrown in this game taking his total to the maximum allowed 70 pitches for one day. Now, John must rest the required 4 days as defined by the rule.

Game 1: John pitches 21 pitches in the first game Saturday morning which is in the MEDIUM LOW category. Therefore, he is required to take one day of rest beginning at midnight Saturday and he is unavailable to pitch Sunday.

Any pitcher exceeding the maximum number of pitches in the LOW category will not be able to pitch in a second game that day and must rest for the number of days required for the category of pitches thrown.