



**Midlothian Amateur  
Baseball Association  
Rulebook**

**2026**

## **8U REC COACH PITCH DIVISION**

8U Rec Coach Pitch is focused on advancing the skills and fundamentals of 8-year-old players. This division is for recreational players with less experience. Players receive pitches from a coach instead of an opposing player. As the players increased in skill level, the rules are slightly more advanced than 7U Rec Coach Pitch. 8U follows 60' base paths with the coach pitching from 40'.

### **RULES**

1. No coach's agreement at the plate meeting can supersede official MABA rules.
2. **At the plate meeting, head coaches from each team must exchange a copy of their lineup including the first three innings of their defensive lineups. (A lineup sheet for fair play can be found on the league's website.)**
3. Both Midlothian Community Park and Jaycee Park are tobacco-free facilities. Please refrain from using tobacco during practices and at games. Also, MCP does not allow the consumption of red Gatorade, gum or sunflower seeds.
4. **SHOW GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP - REMEMBER OUR CHILDREN ARE LEARNING FROM US.**
5. The time limit is set for the lesser of one (1) hour and (15) minutes, or (6) innings. The remainder of the inning will be completed when the time limit expires. A new inning may begin if there are at least five (5) minutes left of gameplay unless both coaches agree to not start a new inning.
6. The complete roster will bat. The batting order will remain as submitted to the opposing manager throughout the game.
7. A maximum of five (5) runs may be scored per ½ inning. The ½ inning is completed when either five (5) runs are scored or three (3) outs are made, whichever occurs first.
8. Players arriving after the start of the game must be placed at the end of the batting order.
9. Each team must play a catcher. Catchers **MUST** wear all safety equipment, including the hanging throat protector.
10. Each team will field a maximum of ten (10) players including (4) outfielders..
11. Teams are permitted to play with seven (7) players; however, they **MUST** take an out in the place of the 8th and 9th batters. If a team plays with (8) players they must take an

out in the place of the 9th batter. If a team does not have seven (7) players when the game starts, the game clock will start, and if the 7th does not arrive within (15) minutes of the start, a forfeit will result.

12. "Run Rule" - If at the end of 3 innings one team has the lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, or ten (10) runs after 4 innings, or eight (8) runs or more after 5 innings the game is over.
13. Offensive players must wear batting helmets while on the playing field for the safety of all players.
14. A tie in a tournament game will be decided by Texas Tie-Breaker rules. The last three batters from the previous inning will be placed on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base with one out. Play will resume until a winner emerges.

## **PITCHING RULES**

1. The pitching coach shall deliver the ball from a standing position, from a distance of at least (40) feet from home plate. Any batted ball that hits the pitching coach shall be declared a dead ball, therefore not considered a pitch, and will not count against the batter's pitch count or as a strike.
2. For the purposes of player development, the pitching coach may help get the batter into the proper batting position between pitches via verbal cues or hand gestures but may not talk to or coach the batter once the pitching coach is in pitching position. For the purpose of keeping the game moving, it is strongly encouraged that the pitching coach's input is minimal. The pitching coach may not leave the mound or mound equivalent unless avoiding a hit ball or to avoid obstructing a defensive play.
3. The pitching coach shall position himself as to not obstruct defensive play. Any intentional interference with a defensive play, as determined by the umpire, shall result in an obstruction call and that pitching coach shall be ejected. The game will result in a forfeit for the violating team if no other coach is available to pitch.
4. The defensive player playing the pitcher should stand a few feet to the left or right and a couple of feet back of the coach pitcher. The defensive pitcher player may not stand directly behind the coach pitcher. It is also recommended that this defensive player wear a batting helmet with a facemask to decrease injury risk.
5. Each batter will get a total of six (6) pitches. After three (3) swinging strikes, the batter is out. If the batter fouls the third or last strike, the batter will get another pitch until a swing and a miss, a hit, -or a no-swing. There will be no called balls, and no walks will be given.

## ON DECK SAFETY

1. Batters can take practice swings and warm up in the batter's box while preparing for their at-bat while on deck. However, batters warming up in the batter's box must always remain fully attentive and aware of live gameplay.
2. If a batter warming up demonstrates a lack of attentiveness or awareness that could lead to an unsafe situation, the umpire maintains discretion to issue a warning to the batter to pay closer attention, order the batter to return to the dugout until it is their time to bat, or call the batter out if the lack of awareness persists after a warning. The umpire's judgment on batter attentiveness shall be final, with safety being the top priority.
3. A thrown bat will result in a warning for each team for the first offense and an out for each additional thrown bat. The decision of an umpire regarding a thrown bat is a judgement call and not disputable.
4. The baserunners will operate on "tight bases," with the runners unable to take a lead off the base. On batted balls to the outfield off a pitch, baserunners can advance at their own risk until infield control is called.
5. Head-first slides are strictly prohibited in all situations. An out will be called for any attempted head-first slide. Coaches are expected to actively teach and reinforce safe and controlled feet-first sliding techniques throughout the season.

## LEAD RUNNER RULES

1. The purpose of the COACH PITCH 8U division is to teach baseball players how to begin to play the game properly. As such, there is no 'infield control'. Instead, the defense must stop the lead runner. Stopping the lead runner is defined as making a baseball play on the lead runner while close enough to cause a reasonable runner to stop or stall in the running, whether on the base or not. This can also be defined as advancing the baseball ahead of the lead runner.
2. Once the umpire has judged the lead runner to be stopped (or would have been stopped by a reasonable runner), time will be called. Technically, "time" will not be called until runners are on a base or just past it due to being stopped by the defense, and the play is over due to the lead runner being stopped.
3. A runner can be stopped even if the player holding the ball is in foul territory.

**Here are a few examples:**

- **Example 1:** The pitcher catches a relay throw in the middle of the field near the mound. He then charges the runner who has rounded 3rd base, causing that runner to stop running and retreat to 3rd base. The runner has been stopped.
- **Example 2:** The second baseman catches a relay throw from right field while standing in the outfield grass near the infield dirt. The runner has rounded 3rd base, pauses momentarily, and then runs home. The 2nd baseman throws to the catcher, but the catcher drops the ball and cannot make the tag. The runner is safe and is allowed to score because the runner was not stopped.
- **Example 3:** The hitter bats the ball to the third baseman, who knocks the ball down, but the ball rolls away from him. The runner at 2nd base advances to third base while the hitter advances to 1st base. The runner at 3rd overruns the bag and goes down the baseline. The runner at 3rd runs back to the bag and is barely safe after the third baseman tries to tag him out. After the third baseman tries to tag the runner, the runner at first leaves to run to 2nd base. The third baseman throws to 2nd base, but overthrows, and the ball travels to the right field fence. Both runners advance to home. This is allowed unless the umpire calls time after tag attempt at third base. Time should not be called if the runner rounds first without stopping during a tag attempt until he reaches second.
- **Example 4:** The shortstop fields the relay throw from the outfield and throws the ball to the pitcher. When the pitcher catches the ball, one runner is almost to 3rd base, and one runner is almost to 2nd base. The pitcher does not look at the runner at 3rd and instead chases down the runner at 2nd base. The runner at 3rd stops on the bag for a moment and then advances home. The runner at 2nd is held at 2nd. The runner who scored was allowed to score because the defense did not attempt to stop him, even though the ball was in full possession in the infield.

## EQUAL PLAY RULES

1. No player can sit out defensively for more than (2) innings.
2. No player shall sit out defensively twice before all players sit out defensively once.
3. Each player must play one (1) inning in the infield and one (1) inning in the outfield within the first three (3) innings.
4. The catcher is considered an infield position.
5. Coaches are empowered to agree upon defensive lineup deviations in the event of injury or illness.

6. Coaches shall exchange lineup cards with batting order and defensive lineup covering the first three (3) innings, with infield positions highlighted. Failure to do so will lead to ejection of the head coach.
7. Umpires are not responsible for monitoring Equal Play Rules, however, can enforce the rule if brought to his/her attention appropriately. Coaches are allowed one challenge of violating the Equal Play Rules and must present evidence to the umpire. If the umpire finds the fair play challenge to be correct, he will call for the opposing team to correct it. Coaches will retain the right to challenge if it is upheld. If the challenge is overruled (an erroneous challenge), then that coach would lose the right to challenge for the remainder of the game. The head coach shall be ejected upon a 2nd violation of Equal Play Rules within the game. Fair play calls fall under the umpire's discretion.
8. If a challenge is upheld, the challenging coach shall report the violation to the division commissioner, who will notify the board of directors. For the next game, this team must now provide a lineup card featuring defensive alignments for all six (6) innings and will not be allowed to deviate except for injury or illness reasons.

## **COACHING RULES**

1. Each team is allowed a maximum of five (5) adult coaches/managers in the dugout during games. The coaching staff must consist of: (1) head coach, (3) assistant coaches, and (1) team manager.
2. Adult coaches are allowed at first and third base during offensive play.
3. Two (2) adult coaches are allowed in the outfield during defensive play.
4. At least one (1) adult (Assistant/Team Manager) must always remain in the dugout.
5. Assistant coaches must position themselves inside of the dugout while the ball is in play.
6. Only the team's head coach may be outside of the dugout during defensive series.
  - a. This is does not include the two coaches in the outfield.
7. Teams may designate (1) additional Alternate Coach, who is not permitted in the dugout or on the field of play unless substituting for another coach. No more than (6) ID cards will be provided to each team for the duration of the season under one of three categories, and background checks have been completed.

## **END OF SEASON PROCEDURES AND STANDINGS**

1. Coaches must turn in league equipment at the end of the last game to a MABA board member.
  - a. The league will not provide end of season awards until all equipment is returned.
  - b. Failure to return league owned equipment may result in a team not being able to register the following season. **Medals/trophies will not be awarded until equipment is returned.**
  - c. The equipment provided is valued at \$350.00, and not turning in this equipment places a great expense on the organization and strains its ability to provide the necessary equipment for these youth players each season. Coaches failing to return equipment at the end of the season will be responsible for the cost of the equipment. .
2. Standings will be determined based on the following:
  - a. Winning percentage.
  - b. Head-to-head winner (if two teams are tied).
  - c. If three teams are tied; the team that defeated the other two teams advances; otherwise, the next tiebreaker is used.
  - d. Total runs allowed.

## **BATS**

1. USA Baseball certified bats.
2. USSSA-certified bats.
3. Drop 12 max bats in the 8U division.
4. One-piece solid wood bats certified by BBCOR, Little League International, or other recognized governing bodies are also permitted.
5. The umpire has the authority to inspect bats and prohibit using any bat that does not meet the certification requirements or appears damaged or unsafe.

## **SCOREKEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The home and visiting teams shall provide a designated scorekeeping representative for all games. This is mandatory. Failure to do so will lead to the ejection of the head coach.

## Home Team

1. The home team scorekeeping representative shall be considered the official scorer and is responsible for keeping the official scorebook or GameChanger.
2. If using GameChanger, the team representative is responsible for ensuring that the app is set up correctly before the game starts, including entering complete and accurate roster information for both teams and scoring the game.
3. The home team must verify the final score with the umpire and visiting team's scorer after the game and submit the official game data in GameChanger promptly after the game ends.
4. If GameChanger is not utilized, the home team must keep an official paper scorebook that is available for review upon request. Failure to make the scorebook available upon request will result in the ejection of the head coach.

## VISITING TEAM

1. Operate the scoreboard and ensure it accurately reflects the score throughout the game.
2. Assist the home team's scorer in ensuring correct roster and lineup information.
3. Communicate with the home team's scorer regarding any discrepancies in scoring during the game.
4. Verify the final score with the home team's scorer and umpire after the game.

The home and visiting team scorers should understand the scorekeeping rules and be proficient in using the GameChanger platform or understand how to properly maintain a paper scorebook. In the event of any scoring disputes or issues with GameChanger during the game, the umpire's ruling shall be considered final.

## AFTER THE GAME

Please ensure that all trash is collected from dugouts and stands. Please leave the field how you would want it if you were the next team to play!

Any questions or concerns please contact the 8U baseball division commissioner:  
[coachpitch@midlothianbaseball.org](mailto:coachpitch@midlothianbaseball.org)