



**MISSISSAUGA MAJORS
2024
ROOKIE BALL OFFICIAL
PLAYING RULES**

1. THE GAME

Rookie Ball is a game of baseball between two teams of ten (10) players per team, although a game may be played with a minimum of eight (8) players. The game is played under the direction of a manager and coaches and played under the authority of an umpire(s) on a recommended Rookie Ball field.

Rookie Ball is the third level of instructional baseball. It is designed to increase the interest level of young people in the game of baseball by stressing and maintaining active participation by all players. There is a mandatory infield/outfield player rotation that ensures all players at a game get an equal chance at playing both infield and outfield positions (Rule 4e).

The offensive team has a maximum of five (5) runs from inning one (1) to three (3) or three (3) outs per inning. Innings four (4) and five (5) are open innings. The defensive team will field one (1) extra outfielder to make as many outs as possible in accordance with the rules. When the offensive team can only field six (6) players, there will still be ten (10) batters. When the defensive team can only field six (6) players they will use no outfielders.

2. PLAYERS & COACHES

- 2.1 All players must be 8 or 9 years of age (born 2015 & 2016).
- 2.2 All coaches must be declared before the game starts.

3. CONDUCT ON THE PLAYING FIELD

- 3.1 The actions of players, managers, coaches, umpires, scorekeepers and league officials must be above reproach.
- 3.2 Players or coaches while participating in a scheduled game are not permitted to deliberately harass or direct discourteous remarks at the officials or any member of the opposing team.
- 3.3 Managers, coaches or players engaged or persisting in conduct contrary to the spirit, principles and objectives of good sportsmanship in Rookie Ball, shall receive a single warning from the umpire. If the offences continue, the offender(s) will be removed from the game.
- 3.4 Anyone removed from the game must leave the playing field and the spectator area. Failure to do so could result in a forfeiture of the game.
- 3.5 Coaches must also control the conduct of the parents and spectators. The umpire can and will suspend games for unruly behavior.
- 3.6 Coaches are not permitted to smoke on the playing field or in the dugout before or during the game.

4. PLAYING FIELD DIMENSIONS

- (a) The distance from the back point of home plate to the centre point of the pitching machine shall be forty-four (44) feet.
- (b) The outside distance between the bases shall be sixty-five (65) feet.
- (c) A safety circle shall be marked, surrounding the pitching machine, eight (8) feet in diameter, with centre at forty-four (44) feet from the back of home plate.
- (d) Regular bases shall be used.

5. LENGTH OF GAME

- (a) The game shall be five (5) innings. In case of a tie, extra innings will be played if light permits. If the tied game must stop due to darkness or curfew, a tie shall be declared and one (1) point awarded to each team.
- (b) In each of the first three (3) innings, the offensive team's at bat shall end when it has scored five (5) runs or if three (3) outs have been made. Innings four (4) and five (5) will be considered open innings and will only end when three (3) outs have been recorded or the mercy rules comes into effect or the home team takes the lead in the last inning.
- (c) A game will be considered complete if a differential of fifteen (15) runs or more exists after four (4) full innings or three and half (3 ½) innings if the home team is ahead, OR at least two (2) hours have expired from the scheduled start time. The plate umpire shall terminate the game at that point and the score shall recorded as such.
- (d) The game shall have a start time of 6:30 pm and a default time of 6:45 pm.
- (e) No new inning will start after 8:15 p.m. and play is dead at 8:30 p.m.

6. PITCHING MACHINE

- (a) The pitching machine shall be set at thirty five (35) miles per hour. The home team coach must supply set-up and adjust the machine prior to the start of each game and have the approval of the opposing head coach.
- (b) The coach of the team batting will feed the machine and at no time shall the coach feeding the machine be allowed to coach the players on the field.
- (c) Adjustments to the pitching machine may be made only at the end of a complete inning at the discretion of the umpire. Pitching machine adjustments will be made ONLY at the discretion of the umpire.
- (d) A regulation baseball approved for Mosquito (Tyke) shall be used.

7. DEFENSIVE POSITIONING AND PLAYS

- (a) The defensive team shall field ten (10) players - the additional player may be positioned as a fourth outfielder only. The game may be played with a minimum of eight (8) players. If, at the start of the game or any point during the course of the game a team cannot field six (6) players, the game will be forfeited to the opposing team with the score recorded as 5-0.
- (b) The player occupying the pitcher position must stand beside (behind the release point of the pitching machine) where lines drawn.
- (c) The player occupying the pitcher position and/or any other fielder must not enter the pitching machine safety circle at any time. Should a pitcher and/or any other fielder, field or attempt to field a batted ball within the safety circle, the batter is automatically awarded first base and all runners advance one base from the base they occupied prior to the play.
- (d) A Fielder's Choice
 - When any defensive player has control of the ball in the infield area (see 5.7) and in the judgment of the plate umpire there is no attempt to make a play on any of the base runners, time will be called, and the base runners, in the judgment of the umpires, will be held on the base they last occupied or the unoccupied base they were approaching when time was called. An infield player raising his hand with the ball therein above his head and holds it there will automatically attain a call of "time" from the Umpire. Outfield players will not receive a call of "time" when the ball is raised above the head. (BALL TO BE THROWN IN).
- (e) All players must not be led to believe that an infield position is the only desirable playing area or that an outfield position is a less desirable area or that the outfield position is a penalty for error or due to less skill. Coaches must make every effort to distribute the infield and outfield positions as fairly as possible among the players over the course of the season. To this end the following player rotation guidelines must be followed:
 - 1. Each player must play at least one (1) inning in the outfield.
 - 2. Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings.
 - 3. A player may play the same infield position for a maximum of three (3) innings during the course of the game.
 - 4. A player may play other infield positions as long as rule #1 is strictly adhered to.

8. OVERTHROWS

Definition: An overthrow is a ball which is thrown past first base or third base and subsequently goes out of play. An overthrow at second base remains a live ball.

- (f) Following an overthrow, all runners including the batter advance one base in addition to the base that they were approaching at the time of the overthrow.

- (g) A thrown ball is live and in play until the umpire calls "TIME" or until the ball leaves the playing field.

9. **ROLLED BALL**

Definition: A ball, which in the judgement of the umpire is released in a manner clearly designed to allow the ball to arrive at or near a base on the ground instead of in the air. A ball which, in the umpire's judgment, is released in a manner clearly designed to allow it to arrive at or near a base on the ground instead of in the air. The most obvious indication of such intent is a ball thrown in an underhand fashion whereas the ball travels from where it is thrown, along the ground to the base.

In the event of a rolled ball, the umpire shall call "TIME" and the ball is dead. The batter and all base runners shall be called safe at the bases that they were approaching at the time.

10. **BATTING**

- (a) Each batter receives a maximum of five (5) "good" pitches. A pitch which is over the batters head or bounces in the dirt shall be ruled a "no pitch" by the plate umpire unless the batter swings at the pitch. The umpire must call last pitch. Failure to do so does not nullify the play.
- (b) A batter must hit a fair ball within the maximum five (5) pitches or be declared out.
- (c) If the batter hits a foul ball on his fifth (5th) pitch, the batter is out.
- (d) A strike is defined as any pitch which the batter swings and misses or a foul ball. There are no called strikes
- (e) Batters cannot obtain a base on ball or advance on a catcher dropping a third (3rd) strike pitch.
- (f) Bunting is not permitted. (Penalty – batter is out.) A bunted ball is considered a dead ball and runners may not advance.
- (g) If a batted ball hits the pitching machine or any person within the safety circle, or settles within the safety circle, the ball is declared dead, the batter is awarded first base and any base runner forced by the award of first base, automatically advances one base. Base runners, who are not forced by the award of first base, do not advance.
- (h) No player is permitted to throw a bat at any time, either while attempting to hit the ball or while attempting to advance to first base.
- (i) If a batter, while at bat or attempting to advance to first base, intentionally or accidentally throws a bat for the first time during the game, the batter shall be warned by the umpire. The coaches of both teams must also record the warning on their score sheets. If the batter repeats the offense in the same game, the umpire shall call "Time", the batter is out and the runners may not advance.

- (j) The infield fly rule does not apply.
- (k) If a batter has two (2) strikes and he foul tips on the third (3rd) strike and the catcher catches the ball he is out.

11. **BASE RUNNING**

- (a) Base runners may advance only on a batted ball which is hit in fair territory.
- (b) Base runners may not advance on a passed ball or a pitched ball returned to the pitcher by the catcher.
- (c) Base stealing is not permitted.
- (d) Base runners may not lead off until the ball is hit. In the event of a lead off violation, the play shall continue as per normal, until the umpire calls "Time". Any outs made during the play shall stand, runners not put out shall return to the bases that they occupied prior to the play and the batter shall bat again, except that if the batter was put out during the play, the next listed batter shall bat. **The player who leads off prior to the ball being hit is automatically out.**

12. **EQUIPMENT AND BASEBALL SHOES**

- (a) Use of baseball shoes with metal spikes or metal cleats are prohibited by both players and coaches.
- (b) The catcher shall wear full catchers equipment including a protective cup, during the game and during the warm ups (including setting up of the pitching machine prior to the start of the game). The use of a catcher's mitt is optional.
- (c) The first baseman may use any type of baseball glove except a catcher's mitt.
- (d) All other fielders must use fielders' gloves.
- (e) The batter, the on-deck batter, all base runners and the defensive player occupying the pitcher position shall wear a protective helmet with two earflaps, securely fastened by a chinstrap.
- (f) All players must wear either a protective cup or Jill.
- (g) Only bats supplied by the Association shall be used. If a batter uses a bat not supplied by the Association the batter is declared out and the bat is removed from the game.

13. **BATTING ORDER**

All eligible players present at the game shall be listed on the team's batting line-up in the order desired by the coach or manager and bat in that order. The first ten (10) players listed shall be the starting fielders. **Eligible players that arrive late being a regular or call-up player may be added up to the completion of the fourth (4th) inning, any late**

arrivals shall be placed at the bottom of the order. The opposing coach must be notified immediately.

14. SUBSTITUTION

Unlimited substitution is permitted defensively.

15. COACHES

Coaches are restricted to normal base coaching positions. There shall be no coaches on the playing field.

16. GAME IN PROGRESS

- (a) At the start of each half inning and following the call of "Time", the plate umpire shall call "PLAY" before the ball is inserted into the pitching machine.
- (b) The plate umpire shall be behind the catcher. The second umpire is the traditional base umpire.
- (c) For each subsequent pitch, it is recommended that the coach operating the pitching machine indicate his intent to pitch by holding the ball above the machine briefly, in plain view of the batter and catcher, just before inserting the ball in the pitching machine. However, failure to do so shall not invalidate the pitch or the resulting action.

17. PLAYERS CALL-UP (PCU)

- (a) Players who are not properly registered with the Mississauga Majors Baseball Association may not be called up to play.
- (b) Rookie Ball teams may call-up from Senior T-Ball house league teams only. Players born in 2017 only.
- (c) A coach who needs one or more call-ups for a game must first obtain permission from the coach of the other team before contacting another team's player.
- (d) Notwithstanding (c) above, if the need for one or more call-ups becomes apparent less than two (2) hours prior to the scheduled starting time and if the appropriate coaches cannot be contacted first, a coach may contact other players directly, provided that the coaches of the players actually called up are so advised within 24 hours after the scheduled start time of the game for which the players were called up.
- (e) All players called-up and all regular players present at a game must play.
- (f) Call-ups are not permitted during play-offs except with the permission of the VP Rookie Ball, who may grant the use of call up(s) to avoid a forfeit.
- (g) All players shall be listed on score sheets by both surname and given name along with uniform number. In addition, players called up shall be indicated on the score sheet

by the designation PCU (player called-up). Only four (4) players are allowed to be called up for any one game.

18. SCORES

18.1 BOTH teams are responsible to submit the game score to the VP Rookie Ball within 48 hours or the game will be considered a double forfeit.

18.2 Standings for league play shall be maintained on the basis of two (2) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie and zero (0) points for a loss.

Note: If a season game has not been played by 24 hours prior to the first scheduled play-off game, then it shall be classified as a double forfeit and no points will be awarded.

18.3 In the event of a tie in the standings which does not affect a team's qualifying for the final play-off position. The play-off position shall be decided by awarding the higher position to:

1. The team with the best won-lost record over the season between the two teams.
2. If still tied, the team with the most favorable run differential between the two teams.
3. If still tied - by the toss of a coin, with the winner taking the higher playoff position.
4. If 3 or more teams are tied, the following shall determine their placing:
 - i. Team with the most wins
 - ii. Team with the most favorable run differential
 - iii. Draw the teams from a hat

19. UMPIRES

- 19.1** Once the batting line-ups have been exchanged the plate umpire takes charge of the game and takes his place behind home plate.
- 19.2** The decisions of the umpires shall be final; however, the managers of each team shall be entitled to ask for permission to approach the umpires for an interpretation of the rules. No umpire shall over-rule any other unless invited into consultation.
- 19.3** The umpires are the only ones that can call "TIME ".
- 19.4** The plate umpire must call out all strikes and foul balls as quickly as possible.
- 19.5** It is the plate umpire's decision on whether a player has bunted or not.
- 19.6** The plate umpire shall notify opposing managers of any changes or additions to the original line-up as reported to them.
- 19.7** The plate umpire may terminate a game before its completion for reasons of darkness, bad weather, dangerous field conditions, or unsportsmanlike conduct from Coaches, players or spectators.
- 19.8** The umpires shall have the authority to rule on any situation not covered specifically in the Official Playing Rules.