



U5 “Storm Ball”

Program Guide

St. Paul Minor Ball

March 8, 2026

1.0 Introduction

The primary goal of the U5 program is to introduce children to the concepts and fundamentals of baseball while making it fun and enjoyable. Skill development will become a primary goal as children progress through the older age divisions.

Storm Ball is a simple game to introduce children to the sport of baseball. It provides an exciting entry level of play for youngsters who will then move on to play within higher divisions. Storm Ball teaches all of the basic fundamentals of the game such as fielding, hitting, catching, throwing and running in a fun and exciting way. The action is continuous and the rules are simple. Each Storm Ball session will be 60 minutes in length and will consist of practice time and game time. The first few sessions will consist entirely of practice time in order to teach the participants the basic skills of the game. Subsequent sessions will consist of an increase in game time and a decrease in practice time depending on how proficient the participants become in the basic skills.

Parents are encouraged to stay and help their child participate. Coaches need as much help as possible with this age group!

2.0 Equipment

Storm Ball is played with a foam bat and foam ball (supplied by St. Paul Minor Ball), removing safety concerns that are created by aluminum bats and hard balls and will help with players being comfortable with stopping the ball. The ball is hit off of a tee. There are no equipment requirements for the children, as baseball gloves and helmets are not required to participate in the game.

3.0 Game Setup

The goal of St. Paul Minor Ball is to keep teams to 7 players or less. The game can work well with as few as 2- 3 children per team in the event that a team is short players.

Field setup requires a base setup approx. 35 feet from the tee (this will be called the Thunder Base) and a Line Marker placed approx 10 feet in front of the tee. No player may come inside this line marker and any ball hit inside the line marker is considered foul and the batter may hit again.

Score is not kept.

The defensive team takes the field (spread out in the infield and behind the Line Marker) while the offensive team bats. Offensive team will be lined up along the backstop, waiting for their turn to bat. Coach will place the foam ball on the tee and a player will come up to bat. When the batter hits the ball, he or she runs to the base. When the batter reaches the base, they loudly yell "BOOM!". If the ball is caught or the defensive player fields it, they loudly yell "BOOM!". The batter then returns to the backstop and the next batter steps up to the tee. There is no "safe" or "out". Once all batters have had a turn, switch the offensive and defensive teams and start again! If there is a low number of players, each player can have more than one turn before switching (to be determined by coaches, both teams will have the same amount of turns when on offense).

There are many variations that can be added as participants become more proficient at hitting, running and fielding.

- Length the distance to the Thunder Base.
- When a player on the defensive team fields the ball, they try to run into a hoola hoop (placed near the Line Marker) before the batter reaches the base.
- When a player on the defensive team fields the ball, they try to pass the ball to another player in the field before the batter reaches the base.
- When a player on the defensive team fields the ball, they throw the ball to a coach or parent who is standing near the Thunder Base.
- Add a second base for batter to run to.
- Have the batter stay on the Thunder Base and run to second base when the next batter hits the ball, then return to the backstop.
- Anything else you think will work!

4.0 Tips and Fundamentals

The below tips and fundamentals are to be used as a guide and should not be considered absolute.

Hitting Fundamentals

- For proper stance batters should stand adjacent to the batting tee in a balanced, athletic position (feet shoulder width apart, back straight, and bent slightly at waist with butt out). Hands holding the bat should be together (not spaced) and above shoulder. Be sure to have players stand back far enough to be able to extend arms as the tendency at this age is to stand too close to the tee.
- Swing in balance without spinning around, starting with the weight back. Follow through over the opposite shoulder. Do not let the bat go.
- The use of a timing step is too advanced at this age and players do better if they learn to swing in balance.

Catching and Fielding Fundamentals

- The player should catch with 2 hands.
- Balls thrown above the waist should be caught with 2 hands with thumbs together.
- Balls thrown below the waist should be caught with 2 hands with pinkies together.
- Groundballs should be fielded with 2 hands either in the “alligator” position or with pinkies together with palms up starting with hand(s) on the ground.
- Teach the player to hold the ball above head and yell “BOOM” after fielding!

Throwing Fundamentals

- Grip ball with two or three fingers along with the thumb.
- Point shoulder to target when setting up to throw.
- The throwing arm should be even or above the height of the shoulder.
- Step with opposite leg toward target when throwing.
- Follow-through to opposite pocket when throwing.

Baserunning Fundamentals

- After hitting the ball, lay the bat down – do not throw the bat!
- Run directly to the base.
- Step on the Thunder Base and yell “BOOM”
- Run through - teach players to not stop at the base