

## **8. U7**

8.1. U7 is an instructional and non-competitive division for seven (7) years olds, and under, during the calendar year. Female players are allowed to be eight (8) years old and under.

8.2. Following a half hour of instructional practice, where each team practices separately with their respective coaches, while sharing the diamond, a game will be played between the two teams. The half hour practice time can be adjusted, if opposing coaches agree to it, in order to shorten the ninety (90) minute duration of the practice/game to maximize the enjoyment and experience of the young ball players.

8.3. U7 will be played as a manual-pitch division and shall follow the official rules of baseball with the following alterations. Coaches shall pitch to their own teams using the machine, at a distance that is comfortable for both the coach and batter.

8.4. The coaches of the fielding team shall act as the umpires.

8.5. There will be a fielder that plays "pitcher." The "pitcher" must always wear a regulation batting helmet and stand near the coach who is pitching.

8.6. The speed (20-25mph) of the pitches will be agreed upon by both the coaches. The intent is to give the batter the best opportunity possible to contact the baseball.

8.7. The coach who is pitching to each batter will alert the batter and fielders that pitching will begin by saying "play ball" when everyone is ready.

### **Game Length**

8.8. Games will be approximately one hour long. The coaches from each team will determine if there is enough time to start another inning when the gametime is approaching one hour. Coaches are free to agree on an adjusted game time, as they see fit, to maximize the enjoyment and experience of the young ball players.

8.9. Each inning will be played completely, as score is not kept, ensuring an equal number of at-bat innings for each team.

### **Batter**

8.10. Approved bats by Baseball Ontario will only be allowed. Wooden bats will not be

allowed at U7.

8.11. The infield fly rule will not apply to U7.

8.12. There will be a continuous batting order and unlimited defensive substitutions. Defensive substitution rules are listed further down the U7 section. Players arriving late will be placed at the bottom of the order.

8.13. All batters and on-deck batters must have a properly worn batting helmet and must have a chinstrap. The only exception to wearing a chinstrap will be if a face cage or "C-Flap" prevents a chinstrap from being attached.

8.14. A coach who is pitching is encouraged to wear a coaching helmet; it does not require ear flaps or a chin strap.

8.15. Each batter will receive a maximum of five (5) pitches. If the batter's fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) pitch is hit foul, the batter will be given another pitch. If the batter does not hit one of the five (5) pitches, a tee will be brought out for the batter to hit from. Batters swing at the tee until they hit a fair ball.

8.16. Coaches will attempt to get out of the way of any ball hit towards them, but if they cannot get out of the way, they can field the ball and toss it to the opposing player playing the pitcher position, so that the player may attempt a put out.

8.17. Metal cleats are not allowed.

### **Runners**

8.18. Runners are required to wear properly fitted batting helmets while on the bases.

8.19. A runner may not lead off, attempt to steal, or steal a base.

8.20. When a fielder makes a direct attempt to throw a ball to any base to make a play, the game is paused, whether the ball is caught or missed. Any overthrow off the first base will be considered a dead-ball, and runners will not advance. All base runners will be placed according to where they were when time was called. They will be sent to where they were going if they are deemed to have been halfway to the next base otherwise, they will be sent back. The placement of the runners will be at the discretion of the fielding coaches.

8.21. Coaches are expected to hold their runners once the infield has possession of the ball.

8.22. Bases will not be awarded for throws that go out of play.

8.23. Players are encouraged to call time once they have the ball on the infield, however calling time will not "end" a play if there are active runners advancing.

8.24. Runners will only be "off the baseline" if their path was taken to avoid being tagged or put out by a fielder. Runners at the U7 age do not take traditional paths from base to base and unless they are doing this to gain an advantage or avoid being put out, they will not be called out.

8.25. All runners are required to slide/and or avoid contact of a defender that is making a play on them. Failure to do so will result in the runner being coached to understand the intent of this rule.

8.26. Catcher position removed for safety reasons in U7.

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### **Defense**

8.28. U7 will play with nine (9) fielders, no catcher - the ninth being an extra out-fielder.

8.29. Each team can have two (2) coaches on the field while their team plays defence. The coaches are there to help with instructions, positioning, and explanations, as well as, acting as the umpire. They must position themselves, so that they are not impacting the ball or the play.

8.30. Defensive substitutions will be unlimited.

8.31. No player will sit out a second time until every other player has sat out once. This rule then follows, that no player can sit out a third time until every other player has sat out a second time, etc.

8.32. No player will sit out two (2) consecutive innings unless injured, for safety reasons or other extenuating circumstances.

8.33. No player will play more than two (2) consecutive innings in the outfield, and not more than four (4) in the outfield in a game.