

South Parkland Youth Association

Prep League Game Rules and Coaching Responsibilities

Mission Statement

The Prep League is an instructional league, focused on teaching the most basic requirements of baseball, namely hitting, fielding, and throwing. Our emphasis is to provide the players with an introduction to the basic skills necessary to allow them to move forward to the next level of organized baseball within the South Parkland Youth Association Leagues. As such, it will be extremely important for all coaches to recognize and accept our prep league objectives, namely to promote the introduction and learning of the sport of baseball to all players, in a fashion that emphasizes having FUN! In fact, we have to make the game fun at this introductory level for children to desire to continue with the game.

1. Playing Field

- A. Pitching distance: 36 Feet – Prep A and Prep AA
- B. Distance between bases: 50 Feet – Prep A; 55 Feet – Prep AA

2. Length of Game

- A. Game length will be 4 complete innings or one hour and thirty minutes
- B. At the conclusion of the game, immediately have your team take their equipment to appropriate outfield (3B Dugout –LF, 1B Dugout-RF) to have your end of the game Team Rah.

3. Equipment

- A. A soft T-Ball (RIF 5) will be used.
- B. All players batting or running the bases must wear batting helmets with face guard.
- C. Coaches should encourage and recommend the use of an athletic protector (cup) for all players at this level. It will be required for any players who are playing in the catcher's position, see rule 8D.

4. Pre-Game Warm-up

- A. Teams will begin there pre-game warm-up 20 minutes prior to the start time of the game.
- B. Routine
 - i. Team Stretch/Agilities OF 5 minutes
 - ii. Pop-ups OF 3 minutes
 - iii. Throwing Routine IF 4 minutes
 - iv. Groundballs IF 4 minutes
 - v. Team Organization IF 4 minutes

5. Batting

- A. Every player will bat during the inning regardless of the number of outs or runs scored.
- B. There will be a 5 pitch maximum unless the 5th pitch was a foul or a ball, batter will receive one additional pitch.
- C. A batting tee MUST be used after the 5th pitch or 6th pitch.
- D. There will be no strike outs or walks.
- E. Bunting is not allowed.
- F. The batter will not throw their bat. If done accidentally, the coach will instruct the proper way to swing. If done in anger the batter is out (coach's discretion)

6. Coach Pitcher / Player Pitch

- A. Coach Pitcher will pitch from ONE KNEE at a distance of 36 feet from home plate.
- B. Coach Pitcher will only field the ball out of self-defense, of a ball hit directly at him/her.
- C. Coach Pitcher will be used for the entire 4 innings throughout the season. (Prep A)
- D. Coach Pitcher will be used for the entire 4 innings throughout the first half of season. (Prep AA)
Rule E is intended for Prep AA only:
- E. Player Pitchers may be used in Prep AA after the Memorial Day Holiday break, under the following conditions.
 - 1. Prep AA players advancing to U/L Mac recreational league play, will need to understand the basics regarding pitching. If the coaches feel that they have players who are ready to pitch, they may pitch to players on their own team.
 - 2. Pitchers should:
 - a. Have enough control to reach home plate consistently and throw “hit-able” pitches.
 - b. Be taught to focus on accuracy, not speed.
 - c. Have their coaches monitor their pitches closely in order to avoid overmatched teammates – coaches intervene and pitch to appropriate batter.
 - d. Only pitch to 2 batters per inning, and a maximum of 6 batters per game.
 - e. Shall only field the ball out of self-defense. Player Pitcher should not interfere with the defensive team’s players, and shall remain in the pitching mound area until the play is completed.
 - 3. If a Player Pitcher throws 4 balls out of the strike zone, no walks will be issued. The Coach Pitcher shall return to the mound to finish the ‘at-bat’.

7. Base Running

- A. Players will be instructed to over run first base (run through).
- B. No stealing, leading off the base or sliding. Runners cannot leave the base until the ball is hit.
- C. Base runners must make a reasonable attempt to stay within the base running paths at all times and shall not interfere with, or deny a fielder the opportunity to make a play on the ball.
- D. No extra bases on overthrows.
- E. Runners that are called out will leave the base. Part of learning good sportsmanship is to learn that it is all right to be called out.
- F. Runners may advance a maximum of two bases per batter including the last batter of each inning.
- G. Coaches will use discretion in sending runners to the next base once a fielder has the ball in their possession. This discretion will reduce the chance of injuries, teach proper approach to base running, and emphasize the interest of fair play among the players.
- H. There is no Infield Fly Rule.

8. Fielders

- A. Infield: A maximum of five players are allowed to play in the infield at one time (P, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS). No extra players in the infield. Infielders shall not line up for play in the path of the base runner, nor can they intentionally block the base runner from a fair chance to reach the next base safely. The player-pitcher must remain with both feet inside the pitching circle until the ball is hit.
- B. All other players will be positioned in the outfield in an umbrella type formation 20 feet behind the baselines.
- C. The player-catcher will be responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it to the adult pitcher.
- D. Catchers must wear the proper protective catcher's equipment while catching. The use of an athletic protector (cup) is required. A batting helmet with face mask may be substituted in the event that the catcher's face mask and helmet do not fit appropriately. Catcher shall not block the plate from any base runner.
- E. Making a play at home plate: If bases are loaded, providing a 'force out' situation, fielders may make a throw to the catcher at home to make the 'out'. Also, if an infielder is within close proximity of home plate while making a play on a hit ball, the player may step on home plate to execute the 'force out' unassisted. In the event that bases are not loaded, a throw to home is not allowed to attempt a tag out play at the plate.

9. Game Day Coaching Responsibilities

- A. Prior to arriving at the field, complete a Prep Line-Up Card. Rotate all players between infield and outfield positions as evenly as possible. Bating order should be rotated each inning by using the player's game jersey numbers. If possible, make several copies of the Prep Line-Up Card for your assistant coaches.
- B. Arrive thirty minutes prior to start time of your game. Set up OF and IF for Pre-Game Warm-Up Routine. Assistant coach should touch up field lines as needed.
- C. Arrange batting helmets and bats.
- D. Begin Pre-Game Warm-up twenty minutes prior to game time.
- E. The equipment box lids should be closed immediately after necessary equipment is taken out. The lids are heavy and can cause severe injury.
- F. Fielding: Coaches are allowed on the field to instruct players. Coaches will also act as umpires.
- G. Bench Behavior: Have players cheer and encourage their fellow teammates as well as the other team. Players must stay on the bench until their name is called for the on deck batting warm-up. Sitting with parents, horseplay or other activities distract from the essence of the learning experience and delay the game.
- H. Game one teams are responsible for lining the field and getting out all equipment and the final game teams are responsible for placing all equipment back in the bins and securing the bins.
- I. All teams are responsible for placing all garbage in trash cans prior to leaving the field.
- J. At all times, players will be required to have game jerseys tucked in and players should be encouraged to wear long pants.
- K. Coaches are required to wear SPYA Coaching Staff Shirt and hat at all games.