



Mt. Prospect Park District
Instructional Baseball Leagues
Rulebook

Updated 4/1/24

I. Program Purpose: The Instructional Baseball Leagues include the following divisions:

- Wee Tee
- Tee Ball
- Rookie

The basic goal of the Instructional Baseball League program shall be to teach fundamental baseball skills, sportsmanship, modified baseball rules, and correct team play in a fun and supervised setting where all athletes, regardless of ability, get an equal opportunity to participate. Some rules have been modified for an age appropriate setting.

Keep in mind, this may be a player's first experience with baseball/tee ball so we want to provide the best experience possible so they can continue enjoying the game.

II. Rule Guidelines: All participants in the Instructional Baseball League program shall be familiar with and adhere to the rules. Ignorance of any or all of these rules shall not be considered an excuse for infractions. If a situation should arise which is not covered by any of the existing rules, a ruling, or decision shall be considered official. The rules which follow are basic in nature and where not stated otherwise, standard baseball rules apply.

III. Conduct and Responsibilities:

1. [Code of Conduct](#) applies to ALL PLAYERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS. Managers and coaches are responsible for the conduct of its players as well as its spectators.
2. Players, Manager & Coaches shall observe proper etiquette while on the field. Profanity swearing or unsportsman-like conduct will not be tolerated by the league and could result in suspension from the baseball program.
3. For everyone's safety, any person who deliberately throws a bat, helmet or any other piece of equipment will be removed from the game and subject to suspension.
4. Managers shall not deliberately slow up play for the purpose of stopping a game that is about to be called due to the time limitations.

IV. Equipment:

1. Tee/Pitching Machine and first aid kit will be located in the knock box at the field. If there is ever an issue with the equipment and/or low supplies in the first aid kit, please contact the MPPD Athletic Department.
2. Each team will be provided the following equipment by the park district. All equipment must be returned to the park district at the conclusion of the season.
 - o 2 Batting Helmets with face mask - used for pitcher & 1st Baseman.
 - o Bucket of baseballs & tennis balls
 - o 1-2 Bats
 - o Catchers Gear (helmet, chest protector, shin guards) - ROOKIE DIVISION ONLY
3. Only gym shoes or shoes with rubber or plastic spikes shall be allowed. **No metal spikes.**
4. Each player needs to supply their own batting helmet and fielding glove. Plastic gloves are not allowed.
5. A protective helmet shall be worn by the batter, the pitcher, the on deck batter, by all base runners and the first baseman when in the game. **The Pitcher must wear a protective helmet with a protective face mask.**

6. Games are to be played with Level 1 Soft T-Ball baseballs supplied by the park district. The home team supplies the game ball, which is then returned to the home team following the game for practices.
7. Boys must wear cups.
8. Official Tee ball bats can only be used, no other bats are allowed.
9. All equipment must be kept in the dugout. The responsibility for enforcement of this rule falls upon the manager and coaches equally.

V. Weather:

1. Heat/Cold Temperature Policy (for outdoor leagues):
 - a. HEAT: Games and practices will be canceled if the heat index reaches 103 degrees or above. Practices can be canceled at the coaches discretion at any time.
 - b. COLD: Air temperature shall be a minimum of 45 degrees Fahrenheit for games. Wind chill factor is a valid reason in determining the actual temperature. Coaches can decide to cancel or host practice when temperature is below threshold.
2. For practices, playability of fields shall be determined by the MPPD Athletic Department by 4:30pm on weekdays. On game days, any cancellation prior to games starting for the day will be done by the MPPD Athletic Department. Coaches may be asked to assist in determining the playability of fields. Moving to the grass is not permitted for games.
Refer to the Mt. Prospect Park District Team Sideline website for field updates.
3. When a lightning strike has been seen and/or thunder is heard, stop the game / practice regardless of the weather forecast. Clear the area in a timely manner.
4. If a game is not played due to weather, the both team’s managers need to inform the MPPD Athletic Department within 48 hours of the scheduled game date.
5. Make up games may be scheduled during the weeknight or additional Saturday at the end of the season and coaches will be notified accordingly.

VI. The Playing Field:

1. The Home team shall place the bases in the correct places, mark the line for the pitcher’s plate & foul lines and set up the batting tee/pitching machine for the start of the game. Home team shall occupy the third base dugout.
2. The Away team shall be responsible for collection of the base and tees after the game and placing them in their correct place (if last game of the day). Away team shall occupy the first base dugout.
3. Bases and Pitcher’s Mound Distances:

<u>DIVISION</u>	<u>BASE LENGTH</u>	<u>PITCHER’S MOUND</u>
Wee Tee & Tee Ball	50 ft	35 ft
Rookie	55 ft	35 ft

Distance from the front of home plate to second base is 70 feet 7 inches.

4. Double base will be used for 1st base and single base will be used for 2nd & 3rd bases.
5. “In play” shall be defined as follows, if not already clearly marked on the field in use - Line drawn from the edge of the backstop behind home plate running straight down left and right field lines.

6. A semi-circle will be drawn from the foul line, 10 feet from home plate and will be considered a foul ball zone. Any ball being hit by a batter from the tee and not traveling further than the outer edge of the semi-circle will be considered a foul ball.

VII. General Game Play:

1. All players from the roster must play in every game, provided they are in attendance at the game.
2. There shall be no suspended games.
3. Extra innings are not to be played.
4. **No score or records/standings** will be kept in any of these leagues.
5. Any parent or coach on the field shall be 18 years of age or older.
6. Team managers and their coaches shall umpire the game. A manager or coach from the offensive team shall umpire the game while his team is on the field. When a half is completed, the opposing team's managers or coach shall umpire the game. The same person need not necessarily umpire the entire game for his team
7. Coaches and managers, as well as their players, shall remain in the dugout on the bench or in the prescribed areas for the duration of the game.
8. Two coaches will be allowed on the field with their team when playing defense. One in left field and one in right field. No coaches are allowed in the infield.

VIII. Baserunning

1. Base stealing is not permitted
2. There shall be no lead-offs by any base runners. A runner may start to advance only after a legal hit has been made by the batter. The violation of one base runner shall affect all other base runners.
3. Should a runner leave too soon and reach the next base safely, he/she is to be returned to the base he/she had occupied.
4. A courtesy runner shall be allowed if a runner or batter is injured.
5. On a close play at the base, any runner is out when he does not slide or attempt to get around the fielder who has the ball or is in the immediate act of fielding the ball. The fielder's immediate act of fielding the ball must be within three feet of the base and any position by the fielder in the baseline without the ball shall be considered obstruction and the run shall score. Any runner who maliciously runs into any fielder including the catcher shall be called out and removed from the game.

IX. Hitting

1. Both teams shall use a batting order consisting of all players from the roster present. These shall be the batting order throughout the game. Any players who arrive after the lineups have been exchanged will be inserted after the last batter in the original batter order.
2. A batter must stand within the regulation batter's box before they may hit the ball. Any ball hit while outside the batter's box shall be a dead ball.
3. There shall be no bunt hits allowed. A batter must always take a full swing and the ball must go beyond "foul ball zone".

X. Fielding

1. A player must play at least 3 innings in the field during the game.
2. No player shall play the same defensive position during a game.

3. A defensive player may re-enter the game at any time.
4. An injured player may re-enter the game at any time. A player when s/he re-enters a game need not necessarily return to the same position they were playing previously.
5. If injury or ejection of a player results in a team having less than 8 defensive players, the team may continue to play with 7 players or borrow players from the other team and continue to play.
6. There shall be no infield fly rule used.

WEE TEE DIVISION (5 YEARS OLD)

I. Player Eligibility: The league shall consist of 5 year olds only. To be eligible the player must be 5 years old as of August 31 of the playing year. To participate in a game a player **must be registered** on the team roster and must not be under suspension or declared ineligible by the park district.

II. Wee Tee Specific Rules:

1. During the first 30 minutes of your time slot each week, teams shall be used this time for practice/skills (see IBL Curriculum for resources). It is recommended that stations be utilized to enhance this time and allow for more reps for the kids.
 - Away team shall use the dirt infield for the first 15 minutes of practice, then use the outfield grass for the next 15 minutes before the game begins.
 - Home team shall use the outfield grass for the first 15 minutes of practice, then use the dirt infield for the next 15 minutes before the game begins.
2. After the 30 minute practice time has lapsed, teams are expected to gather to play a game against each other. A regulation game shall be **75 minutes**.
3. Defensive positions shall consist of:
 - 1 pitcher - must wear batting helmet with mask
 - 5 infielders (1B, 2B, SC, SS, 3B)
 - i. 1st baseman (1B) must wear batting helmet with mask
 - ii. Short Center (SC)
 - 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF)
 - i. Should play at the edge of the grass/dirt.

If attendance is low for a given game, teams should not use Short Center (SC) or additional outfielders positions.
4. All batters will be allowed to hit per offensive inning, no matter how many fielded outs are made. Every player should run all bases with the last batter running every base at their bat.
5. The ball shall be placed on the tee in a hitable position by the coach of the offensive team before the play is to begin. The hitter then must get the go ahead from the coach before they may hit the ball to begin the play. The offensive coach must make sure the defensive team is ready before giving the go ahead. Each hitter shall receive a maximum of 5 attempts to put the ball in play. If the hitter does not put the ball in play after 5 attempts, a coach or parent should assist the hitter.
6. The ball remains in play from the time the ball is legally hit into fair territory until the ball is returned to the infield.

TEE BALL DIVISION (KINDERGARTEN)

I. Player Eligibility: The league shall consist of 6 year olds only. To be eligible the player must be 6 years old as of August 31 of the playing year. To participate in a game a player **must be registered** on the team roster and must not be under suspension or declared ineligible by the park district.

II. Tee Ball Specific Rules:

1. A regulation game shall be 90 minutes and **NO GAMES MAY GO PAST 90 MINUTES.**
2. Each team shall have the field for 10 minutes before the start of the game for warm up. The away team shall have the field first, the home team shall have the field second.
3. Defensive positions shall consist of:
 - o 1 pitcher - **must wear a batting helmet with a face mask.**
 - o 5 infielders (1B, 2B, SC, SS, 3B)
 - i. **1st baseman (1B) must wear a batting helmet with a face mask**
 - ii. Short Center (SC) should play behind 2nd base
 - o 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF) - can play an additional outfield if all 10 players are present.
 - i. Should play at the edge of the grass/dirt.

If attendance is low for a given game, teams should not use Short Center (SC) or additional outfielders positions.

4. All batters will be allowed to hit per offensive inning, no matter how many fielded outs are made.
 - o Starting week 4, If a defensive play is made and a runner is out, the runner shall return to the bench. However, all batters will be allowed to hit per offensive inning, no matter how many outs are made.
5. Hitters will hit from a hitting tee that should be placed on home plate.
6. The ball shall be placed on the tee in a hittable position by the coach of the offensive team before the play is to begin. The hitter then must get the go ahead from the coach before they may hit the ball to begin the play. The offensive coach must make sure the defensive team is ready before giving the go ahead. Each hitter shall receive a maximum of 5 attempts to put the ball in play. If the hitter does not put the ball in play after 5 attempts, a coach or parent should assist the hitter.
7. The ball remains in play from the time the ball is legally hit into fair territory until the ball is returned to the infield.
8. Baserunners are only able to advance one base at a time, even on a hit.

ROOKIE DIVISION (1st GRADE)

I. Player Eligibility: The league shall consist of 7 year olds only. To be eligible the player must be 7 years old as of August 31 of the playing year. To participate in a game a player must be registered on the team roster and must not be under suspension or declared ineligible by the park district.

II. Rookie Specific Rules:

1. A regulation game will be 90 minutes and **NO GAMES MAY GO PAST 90 MINUTES.**
2. Each team shall have the field for 10 minutes before the start of the game for warm up. The home team shall have the field second.
3. The 9 Defensive positions shall consist of:
 - 1 catcher (with a coach/parent/adult aside to help retrieve balls)
 - 1 pitcher - should stand 3-5 ft. behind the machine OR to the left or right of the machine for visibility. **Must wear a batting helmet with a face mask.**
 - 4 infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B)
 - **1st baseman (1B) must wear a batting helmet with a face mask.**
 - 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF) - can play an additional outfield if all 10 players are present.
 - Should play at the edge of the grass/dirt.

If attendance is low for a given game, teams should not use a extra outfielders or a catcher positions.

4. The Blue Flame Pitching Machine will be used at this division. It is located in the knack box at the field. The Pitching Machine setting should not be adjusted and should be left at **5-2-2** for the entire season. The pitching machine shall be staked down approximately **7** feet in front of the pitching rubber. It is recommended that coaches water down the area before staking down.
 - a. A hitting tee is additionally available at the field if needed.
5. The offensive coach will operate the pitching machine for their team and must make sure the defensive team is ready before pitching to the batter. A maximum of **5 pitches from the pitching machine per batter.**
 - a. If the batter fouls off the 5th pitch, then 1 more pitch may be given to the batter.
 - b. If the batter strikes out or fouls off the 6th pitch, the coach can bring out the tee so the player can get a hit.
6. Offensive team will bat until 3 fielded outs are made OR all rostered players present bat **once per inning.** If a defensive play is made and a runner is out, the runner shall return to the bench.
7. The ball remains in play from the time the ball is legally hit into fair territory until the ball is returned to the infield.
8. Baserunners can advance more than one base at a time on a base hit.



Mt. Prospect Park District

Instructional Baseball League Rules Quick Sheet

RULE	WEE TEE	TEE BALL	ROOKIE
Ages/Grade	Pre K - 5 years old by 8/31	Kindergarten	1st Grade
Practices	First 30 minutes on Saturdays - used for practice	Weeknight practice as selected by coach	Weeknight practice as selected by coach
Time Limits	No new inning after 75 minutes	No new inning after 90 minutes	No new inning after 90 minutes
Base Length	50 ft	50 ft	55 ft
Pitching Distance	N/A	N/A	Set up machine approx. 48 ft from home plate
Pitcher Positioning	At designated pitching rubber	At designated pitching rubber	Behind the Machine but off to a side for visibility
Hitting Format	Tee	Tee	Blue Flame Pitching Machine (5-2-2)
Hitting Attempts	max. 5 swing attempts before coach assistance	max. 5 swing attempts before coach assistance	max 5 attempts; If a player is unable to hit off machine, tee should be used
Bats	Official "Tee Ball" bats only; No wood bats		
Positions	1 pitcher 5 infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B) 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF) Short Center (SC) position can be used if needed.	1 pitcher 5 infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B) 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF) Short Center (SC) position can be used if needed.	1 pitcher 5 infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B) 3 outfielders (LF, CF, RF) 1 catcher Short Center (SC) position can be used if needed.
Fielding Helmets	Pitcher & 1st Base positions must wear protective helmet in field.	Pitcher & 1st Base positions must wear protective helmet in field.	Pitcher & 1st Base positions must wear protective helmet in field.
Baserunning	Advance one base at a time; last batter runs all bases	Advance one base at a time; last batter runs all bases	Advance more than one base at a time on a hit.
Outs	NONE- baserunner stays on base regardless if an out if made	Starting week 4, outs will be recorded BUT the entire batting order still bats.	Outs are recorded - base runners shall return to the dugout if out at a base.
Inning Ends	After the entire batting order has batted.	After the entire batting order has batted.	After the entire batting order has batted OR if 3 outs are made

Please see the Rule Book for further details on these rules.



INSTRUCTIONAL BASEBALL LEAGUE - PROGRAM CURRICULUM

SPORTSMANSHIP/TEAM COMRADERY

- Work on learning team member names. Have the team get in a circle and say the name of the player they roll (or throw as they get older) the ball to. Continue until all players have had it once. Repeat weekly.
- Before/after practice, find an opportunity to talk to the players about cheering/supporting members of their team, and similarly being respectful of the other team's players (for example, no laughing or comments as players attempt to hit the baseball).
- For Wee Tee, explain to players what it means to be on a team. Explain that we take turns, we cheer for each other, we will all get a chance to hit and play different positions.

INTRODUCE TERMINOLOGY

- Base order & names
- Fielding positions & responsibilities

FIELDING / THROWING TECHNIQUE

- Proper grip on the ball - teach them 4 seam grip it is always more accurate when throwing
- Point glove hand & step towards the person you are throwing to
- Throwing arm back - make a muscle (flex) then throw - have them pretend to shoot a bow and arrow - it is the same motion, bring their arm back like the bow string and release
- Teach follow through by having them pretend to put on their seat belt, their follow through should be similar - all the way across their body.

HITTING

- Two hands on the bat. Swinging hand on top.
- Swing all the way through - start with your chin on your front shoulder, end your swing with your chin on your back shoulder
- Head down, eyes on the ball. Watch the bat meet the ball.
- Drop bat after contact with ball. Do NOT throw the bat.

GROUND BALLS

- Athletic stance (like sitting in an imagery chair)
- Proper glove positioning / Glove in front of body

- “Gator chomp” ball into glove. Head down, watch ball go into glove all the way through
- After you field the ball, shuffle toward first base, bring the ball to a throwing position, and make a good throw to the first baseman

FLY BALLS / CATCHING THE BALL

- Squeeze the glove shut once ball is in glove - pinch thumb and pinky finger together in your glove hand
- Use two hands when catching - cover the ball with your non-glove hand
- Keep glove up but never block your view of the ball
- When receiving the ball, always give the thrower a target by putting both your bare hand and glove up
- When catching the ball, all balls thrown above your waist, your glove hand thumb should be facing up. If the ball is thrown below your waist, your glove hand thumb should be facing down. This makes it easier to catch and keeps you safe.

BASERUNNING

- When going through the base (1st base only), touch the front half with your foot.
- When rounding the base, use foot to touch corner of base

CATCHER POSITION (ROOKIE LEAGUE ONLY)

- Catch the ball from the pitcher/pitching machine. Squeeze your glove once the ball is in it to securely catch the ball.
- Be in a crouch position to receive the ball from the pitcher/pitching machine.
- Keep eye on the ball at all times.
- Use equipment on self to block the ball and keep it in front of you.

Sample practice plan with links to drills: [IBL Sample Practice Plan](#)



Sample Practice Plan



Activity	Time
Warmups	8 minutes
Baserunning	5 minutes (13 minutes total)
Water 💧	2 minutes (15 minutes total)
Skills Stations	18 minutes (6 minutes per; 31 minutes total)
Water 💧	2 minutes (33 minutes total)
Team Infield & Game Scenarios	7 minutes (40 minutes total)
Team Scrimmage	20 minutes (60 minutes total)

Warmups

- Run foul pole to foul pole
- Team stretch
- Partner catch along the OF line or [over under](#) or [name game](#)

Baserunning

- Home to first (use a timer to make it fun)
- [Listen to coach](#)
- Around the bases (use a timer to make it fun)
- [Basepath relay](#) (one group starts at home and the other at 2nd base)

Stations

Depending on how many coaches, split the team into 2-3 groups for stations. Each coach runs a station. Each group rotates through all stations.

Sample drills below 📌

Ground balls

- [Alligator traps](#)
- [Ground ball shuffle](#)
- [Hit the target](#)
- [Force out, tag out](#)

- [Pitcher fielding practice](#)

Throwing

- [Bullseye](#)
- [Knock it off](#)
- [Clean up crew](#)
- [Kneel of fortune](#)
- [Four corners](#)

Catching the ball

- [Two ball](#)
- [Pop quiz](#)
- [The box](#)
- [Superstar](#)
- [Wide receiver](#)

Hitting

- [Soft toss](#)
- [Front toss frenzy](#) (wiffle ball)
- [Force fields](#)
- [The boulder](#)
- HR derby (tee or coach pitch w/ wiffle balls)

Team Infield & Game Scenarios

- [Gold glove](#)
- [9 outs or 12 outs](#)

Team Scrimmage

- Standard scrimmage (two teams)
- Speedball (three teams; rotate after ~4-5 minutes)