

**2024 MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS RECREATION
7-8 YEAR OLD BOYS MACHINE PITCH
RULES AND REGULATIONS**

High School League Baseball Rules apply, except as amended herein:

RULE 1.00 PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.01** The Middleburg Heights Recreation Program is designed to provide wholesome recreational activity for residents of our community. In addition, such a program should teach basic skills, most important of which are sportsmanship and teamwork.
- 1.02** Objectives of the Middleburg Heights Recreation Baseball Program include the following: to familiarize its participants with the rules and fundamentals of the game, to assist them in development of baseball skills, and most importantly to have fun.

RULE 2.00 UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, THE PLAYING FIELD

- 2.01** Jerseys and caps are provided by the Recreation Department and must be worn by each player during the game. Hats need to be worn facing forward. Jerseys cannot be altered, and must be tucked in. Infractions will be enforced based on frequency and addressed by the Athletic Director.
- 2.02** Players must wear long pants. Players will not be allowed to participate in games while wearing shorts.
- 2.03** Metal spikes are **NOT** permitted.
- 2.04** Game balls will be a RIF 5 or greater.
- 2.05** The maximum bat barrel size is 2 5/8" in diameter with a maximum drop of -10 and the minimum barrel size is 2 1/4" in diameter with no drop restrictions.
- 2.06** The batter, on-deck batter, all base runners, and bat boy/girl must wear a protective helmet when on the field of play. **PENALTY:** *A base runner that deliberately removes his helmet while the ball is in play shall be warned and may be declared out for repeated offenses. The ball would remain alive and in play.*
- 2.07** The catcher must wear a protective helmet, mask with throat protector, chest protector, shin guards and athletic cup to participate in the game. Any player warming up the pitcher between innings from the pitcher's rubber must wear a protective helmet and mask.
- 2.08** The infield bases should be set at 60 feet using a safety base at first base.
- 2.09** The pitching machine will be set up at about 46 feet; the speed will be set at about 35mph to start the season and adjusted periodically to a speed that offers a challenge to the majority.

RULE 3.00 GAME PRELIMINARIES, GROUND RULES

- 3.01** Only a team's head coach, a maximum of three (3) assistant coaches, players in uniform, and bat boy/girl are permitted in the dugout or playing area.

3.02 The defensive players presently in the game, the batter, one (1) on-deck batter, and two (2) base coaches are the only personnel permitted on the field. Coaches and players must remain in the dugout.

3.03 Equipment must be kept in the dugout and off the field of play.

PENALTY: *For violation of Rules 3.02 - 3.03, obstruction or interference may be called against the offending team, and the umpire may impose such penalties as to correct the situation had no equipment been left on the field of play.*

3.04 Two (2) adult coaches may coach the bases. They need not be in uniform.

3.05 It is illegal to assist the baserunner by touching him to hold back or to proceed to another base while the ball is in play and alive. The runner will be called OUT.

RULE 4.00 STARTING AND PLAYING THE GAME

4.01 A regulation game consists of six (6) innings unless extended because of a tie score with time remaining, or shortened because the home team needs none or only a fraction if it's half of the sixth inning; or because of weather, curfew, run rule, or time limit. Once the time limit is reached, the inning in play will be the final inning.

4.02 Teams have a five (5) minute grace period *FROM THE SCHEDULED STARTING TIME*. Coaches are asked to not cause unnecessary delays between innings. Umpires **may** start to call strikes prior to the batter entering the batter's box if delays by the same team are repeated.

4.03 If a game is called due to inclement weather, it is a regulation game:

A. If four (4) innings have been completed, and 1 team has the lead.

B. If the Home Team is ahead after three & one half (3 ½) innings have been completed.

NOTE: *If game is called and 2 innings have been completed, but neither A nor B are reached, or if 4 or more innings have been completed and the game is tied with time remaining in the time limit, the game will be continued at a later date from the exact point at which the game was stopped. If the 2nd inning has not been completed (6 outs recorded per team), the game will be rescheduled and started over.*

4.04 Teams may field ten (10) defensive players positioned in normal defensive alignments with four (4) outfielders on the *grass* area in regular outfield positions.

4.05 Free substitution will be allowed throughout the game. Late arrivals playing time may be reduced (coach's decision). Players arriving on time must play at least three (3) innings defensively. No player may sit the bench in two (2) consecutive innings. If the game ends without playing 6 innings, players who don't play their required 3 innings in the field **MUST** start the next game in which they participate and play 3 innings in the field by the end of the 5th inning. Any violation of these requirements should be reported to the Scorekeeper and the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will enforce penalties based on frequency and discretion.

Note: The official scorer and opponent must be informed of any disciplinary action being taken by reducing a participant's playing time and approved by the field supervisor.

4.06 All players bat in a continuous order throughout the game, regardless of who is in the game defensively.

4.07 The manager, ten minutes prior to the start of each game shall present a lineup card with the batting order to the Official Scorer. Names and jersey numbers for all available players must appear on the lineup card.

- 4.08** A MINIMUM of eight (8) players are needed to start and continue a game. Should additional players arrive late, they may be inserted immediately and put at the end of the batting order. If a team's roster consists of 9 or fewer players, that team may play with only seven (7) without forfeiting.
- 4.09** Should a player be forced to leave the game due to injury, illness or for personal reasons, his at bat will be by passed and **NO OUT RECORDED.** If the player is disqualified (ejected from the game) by a game official or by his coach for disciplinary reasons, an out will be recorded every time his at bat is bypassed.
- 4.10** The Recreation Department reserves the right to place late registrants on teams after the teams are assembled. Late registrants will not be assigned to teams if it is determined that the player will affect league parity.
- 4.11** All players in attendance for the entire game **MUST** play at least 1 inning defensively in the infield. The 5 infield positions are defined as P, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS. If a player refuses to play an infield position or must be kept out of the infield for safety reasons, the league director & a parent must be notified. **NO PARTICIPANT MAY PLAY MORE THAN 3 INNINGS AT THE SAME INFIELD POSITION.** Any violation of these requirements should be reported to the Scorekeeper and the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will enforce penalties based on frequency and discretion.

RULE 5.00 THE BATTER

- 5.01** Batter must wear a batting helmet. If he enters the batter's box without one, umpire should instruct him to get a helmet. If a pitch is thrown, batter is out.
NOTE: *Parents/Players are responsible for enforcing wearing of facemasks on batting helmets by batters electing to use them. Coaches are encouraged to help keep track.*
- 5.02** If the catcher drops the third strike, the batter is out and may not attempt to reach first base.
- 5.03** Bunting is NOT allowed.
- 5.04** The Infield Fly Rule is NOT in effect.
- 5.05** A team will bat no more than the maximum number of players on a team's official lineup in a single inning. Example: Team A has 10 in the batting order while Team B has 13. Therefore, 13 batters = once around for both teams.

RULE 6.00 THE RUNNER

- 6.01** NO BASE STEALING will be permitted.
- 6.02** Runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball has reached home plate.
PENALTY: *The base runner returns to the base he last occupied at time of the pitch. On a hit or error he can advance only as far as he is forced to by the runner behind him. If thrown out, the out stands.*
EXCEPTION: *Any base runner intentionally leaving a base early to gain an unfair advantage shall be called "out. Umpire may also declare a runner out, if in his opinion, the runner would not have reached the base safely had he not left early.*
- NOTE:** *The umpire should give the delayed dead ball signal by extending his left arm.*
- 6.03** The High School rule will apply for failure to touch a base, or failure to properly tag up after a caught fly ball. The procedure to follow depends on whether the ball is dead or alive.

LIVE BALL: A defensive player may either tag the base runner or throw to the base that the runner either missed or left early while attempting to tag up. The umpire will then rule, safe or out.

DEAD BALL: Once time has been called by an umpire, either a coach OR a defensive player can verbally appeal that a base runner either missed a base or left a base early while attempting to tag up, by describing the infraction to the umpire. The umpire will then rule either safe or out.

6.04 (Optional) Speed Up Rule With two (2) outs and the catcher on base, manager should use a courtesy runner. The **Courtesy Runner** would be the player charged with the last out.

6.05 A legal slide must be feet first. A runner will be called out for attempting a head first slide while advancing to a base. A head first slide is legal when attempting to return to a base.

6.06 STOPPING BASERUNNERS

- **BATTED BALL NEVER LEAVES THE INFIELD**

ALL base runners, including the batter/runner may advance only 1 base on a batted ball that never leaves the infield, except on an overthrow made by the fielder to a teammate covering a base. In this case, each runner may advance 1 base only at their own risk. If the player catches the ball cleanly, base runners will not be allowed to advance further. Advancing to the extra base on an overthrow is at the RISK OF THE BASERUNNER, as in the above rule. The fielder has no risk in making a throw. The attempt to advance to the extra base after the overthrow MUST BE STARTED prior to the ball being secured by a player on defense.

- **BATTED BALL HIT TO THE OUTFIELD**

Once a batted ball that is hit to the outfield is in control by any infielder on the defensive team that is physically in the infield, all base runners may continue to advance, AT THEIR OWN RISK, only if they had started to run to that base prior to the control of the ball in the infield. The defense is encouraged to make a play on these advancing runners with NO RISK, since the base runners may advance no further, even if the ball is thrown out of play.

RULE 7.00 PITCHING

7.01 The Rookie League will use the pitching machine for the entire season. The base umpire will operate the machine. He will present the ball to the batter before placing the ball in the machine.

- Early in the season players will be cautioned about taking strikes; strikes will not be called.
- **Strikes only will be called starting after each team has played at least 2 games.** No balls will be called since no walks are allowed. No 3rd strikes called during regular season games.
- Speed and accuracy will be adjusted to suit the majority. Adjustments will be made by staff personnel ONLY. The speed will be increased as the season progresses.
- **Any batted ball that strikes the machine or the operator will be declared dead. The batter is awarded first base and the runners may only advance to the next base.**
- Any thrown ball that strikes the machine will remain a live ball.

RULE 8.00 RUN RULE, TIME LIMIT

8.01 RUN RULE - If the losing team is fifteen (15) or more runs behind after three (3) innings or ten (10) or more runs behind after four (4) or more innings the game will end and be called an official game.

8.02 TIME LIMIT - One (1) hour from the 1st pitch. The inning in progress will be completed. Once the home team is batting and has the lead, the game will end immediately if the time limit has been reached.

NOTE: *Official starting time begins with the first pitch. Scorer shall announce the start time, and note this time on the official score sheet. The scorekeeper will inform the umpire(s) when the game is approaching the time limit; umpires inform dugouts. Tied games that reach the time limit will be recorded as such.*

RULE 9.00 CONDUCT
NO PLAYER, MANAGER, COACH OR SPECTATOR SHALL:

- 9.01** Ever physically assault, or direct abusive language toward League Officials, opposing team members or their supporters.
- 9.02** Ever threaten or attempt to intimidate any League or Recreation Department Official or staff member.
- 9.03** Be guilty of objectionable negative demonstration at an Official's decision.
- 9.04** A base runner is **NOT** required to slide to avoid a fielder who has or is about to have possession of the ball. If the runner makes what the umpire rules as **MALICIOUS CONTACT** with a defensive player the ball is immediately dead, and the runner shall be called out. The runner may be ejected from the game, at the discretion of the umpire. A player ejected from the game is subject to suspension by the Recreation Department.
- 9.05** Use of profane, obscene or vulgar language in any manner or at any time.
- 9.06** Appear upon the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition.
- 9.07** Be guilty of gambling on any game or outcome of the game with any spectator, player or opponent.
- 9.08** Smoke while on the field of play, or in the bench area during a game or practice.
- 9.09** Be guilty of throwing hat, bat, glove or other equipment in objectionable demonstration to a call.
PENALTY: *Disqualification from the game and suspension from league play as determined by the Recreation Department.*
- 9.10** In the interest of sportsmanship managers, coaches and players may root for their own teammates ONLY. Comments directed at the opposing team are prohibited.
- 9.11** Beating on dugouts, shaking fences, or any similar actions are prohibited.
- 9.12** Recreation Department has developed a broad disciplinary policy. Coaches have the option of adding to this policy, however, team disciplinary policies **MUST** be fair and consistent. Recreation Department reserves the right to review and reverse disciplinary actions deemed unacceptable.
PENALTY: *For violation of Rules 9.01 - 9.12 any manager, coach, or player disqualified is automatically suspended from participation in the next game. Serious and repeat violations may warrant additional penalties. Disqualified/suspended personnel are NOT permitted at their team's game site.*

RULE 10.00 PROTESTS

10.01 Protests must be declared at the time of the occurrence, and before the next pitch. Protests cannot be submitted over judgment calls (i.e. safe/out, ball/strike, fair/foul).