

# 2021 COUNTY YOUTH BASEBALL/SOFTBALL PROGRAM RULES

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Clinton County does not keep "Standings" for its Baseball/Softball Program.
- A game should not be cancelled for lack of players. If the coaches agree, share players and complete the game. This will not be considered a scrimmage, but an Official County game.
- Sunglasses may be worn in the outfield, but they are illegal to wear at the plate while batting.
- Jewelry, such as ear rings, rings, bracelets and necklaces ARE NOT permitted during play.
- Municipalities should supply each team with a well-stocked Medical Kit and Ice for each practice and game!
- Any player who loses consciousness in a game or at practice must provide written permission from a certified medical doctor before they return to play.

## 2. RULE REGULATIONS

- All rules provided by the Clinton County Youth Bureau should be followed; there will be no negotiation of the rules by any coordinator, coach, player or parent. Should a game be played not in keeping with the Official County rules that game will no longer be considered a County game and therefore the County will no longer be responsible for providing payment to Sports Officials scheduled for that game.
- **Not following the County Rules will result in a Coaches' Code of Conduct Violation.**

**UMPIRE NOTE:** If County Rules are not followed it will not be considered a County Game; Sports Officials are only paid for County Games. If Coaches elect not to follow the County Rules you are not required to officiate that game! Please fill out an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Report Form any time a Coach does not follow County Rules.

## 3. ~~ALCOHOL, DRUGS, SMOKING & ABUSIVE LANGUAGE~~

- Will not be tolerated around the game area. All citizens, Youth Commissions and Coaches are asked to help enforce this policy on their fields.
- If these situations should go beyond control, umpires have been instructed to discontinue the game.

## 4. COACHES

- Each County Youth Baseball/Softball Team will be permitted to have one (1) Head Coach and two (2) Assistant Coaches. Every person acting in a coaching capacity must sign and return a Code of Conduct. For your convenience copies have been included in this Manual. Please be sure any and all Assistant Coaches have completed the Code of Conduct **BEFORE** acting in a coaching capacity. Signed Codes of Conduct can be returned to the Youth Bureau via Fax (565-4775), Email (youth@clintoncountygov.com), Mail (137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901) or at your Recreation Assistant visits.
- **Allowing a person to coach who has not submitted a Code of Conduct to the Youth Bureau is a violation of the Coaches' Code of Conduct for the Head Coach.**

## 5. DISQUALIFICATIONS & SUSPENSIONS

- Each umpire has the authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager, substitute, or spectator for repeatedly objecting to decisions, for unsportsmanlike conduct or language and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.
- **Protests will not be considered as we are a Non-Competitive Instructional Program, we do not keep standings and we do not want to change the nature of our Program.**
- Inquiries into Rule Interpretations or Rule Enforcements may be made at any time and should be directed to the **RECREATION DIRECTOR ONLY**. These inquiries should be based on genuine curiosity or desire to improve the officiating of our program. Should corrections in our officiating of the game need to be made, they shall be done so by the **YOUTH BUREAU**

**STAFF ONLY.**

**6. SUSPENSION OF PLAY/WEATHER POLICY:**

Once a game has been started the paid referee shall have the responsibility as to whether and when play should be stopped due to weather conditions, unfit field conditions, or darkness. That referee also decides whether or when to resume play after a rain suspension. No game shall be called until at least 20 minutes after play has been suspended. The referee may continue the suspension as long as there is a reasonable chance to resume play.

**\*\*It is imperative that coaches and officials cooperate and all involved use common sense\*\***

If darkness, rain or other causes interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the official, it becomes a regulation game if 1 complete half or more of the game has been played. If less than 1 half of the game has been played, the game shall be rescheduled.

**Thunder or Lightning**

Under no circumstances will a game be started, played or resumed once Thunder or Lightning is evident. If Thunder or Lightning is present within 2 (two) hours before the scheduled Game Time the game shall be cancelled. Umpires have been instructed to instantly discontinue all games. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

**Heat Index Procedures**

Temperature should be monitored before a scheduled game using the HEAT INDEX (feels like) or WET BULB INDICATOR. The Youth Board has adopted NYSPHSAA Heat Index procedures. These following instructions should be followed by all coaches.

Feels Like Temp. (Heat Index) or Wet Bulb indicator 79 or under	No restrictions on activity
Heat Index Caution: Feels Like Temp. (Heat Index) or Wet Bulb indicator 80 to 85 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider reducing time allotted for practice.
Heat Index Watch: Feels Like Temp. (Heat Index) or Wet Bulb indicator 86 to 90 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider changing practice time to when Feels Like Temp. is lower. Consider reducing time allotted for practice. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice.
Heat Index Warning: Feels Like Temp. (Heat Index) or Wet Bulb indicator 91 to 95 degrees	Provide ample water and water breaks every 15 minutes. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider changing practice time to when Feels Like Temp. is lower. Consider reducing time allotted for practice. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice. Light weight loose fitting clothes should be worn.
Heat Index Alert: Feels Like Temp. (Heat Index) or Wet Bulb indicator 96 degrees or greater	<b><u>No outside activity, practice or game.</u></b> Inside activity should only be held in air conditioned environment.

\*To help determine if it is safe to play you can download the WeatherBug app to your phone, enter the zip code or city and state in the location section of the app or log into [www.weatherbug.com](http://www.weatherbug.com)

**7. SPORTS OFFICIALS**

- **It is the responsibility of each Youth Commissions' Sports Coordinator to assign officials for their home games** from the approved list provided by the Youth Bureau. Coordinators may choose to forward this list on to coaches.
- At the Grasshopper Level the County pays for **ONE** Umpire per game.
- At the Pee Wee and Pony Levels the County will pay for **UP TO TWO** Umpires per game. (**Pay rate is the same with or without a second Umpire**)

## 8. PARTICIPATION

- Every player who attends practice should receive EQUAL playing time from game to game.
- Batting orders should be changed from game to game, as well as, the starters for the game.
- **Every player must play a minimum of 3 innings per game. In the event of a team having 20 or more players, the participation requirement would be a minimum of 2 innings (Pony more than 18 players = 2 innings).** *\*\*The only reasonable exceptions to this rule would be unusually large rosters, or players not participating for disciplinary reasons.*

**UMPIRE NOTE:** Any questions or concerns regarding playing time should be directed to the Youth Bureau Office at 565-4750.

## 9. OVERLOADING OF TEAMS

- **“All Star” or “Elite” Teams are not permitted within the County Program.**
- Towns with multiple teams within the same Age Group must ensure teams are evenly split by skill level.
- In a program of our size, mismatches are bound to happen from town to town – however there should **NEVER** be a mismatch within the same Municipality. **This is unacceptable.**
- The Coordinators are to split teams evenly and fairly among coaches with equal skill and age/grade levels. If Coordinators will be allowing coaches to select players for their own teams ALL COACHES should be represented at the same meeting!
- To help towns ensure each team is selected fairly, the following procedures have been used successfully in the past:

Once signups are completed and multiple teams are determined to be necessary for an age group all players and coaches should be present for the first practice to assess skill level prior to the breaking up of teams.

Option 1: Break players up by Age. Coaches then take turns selecting from players in the highest age group. Then take turns selecting from players in the middle age group and finally from the lowest age group.

Option 2: Break players up by Age: Each coach then each selects one player from the highest age group, then one player from the middle age group and then one from the lowest age group.

Option 3: Break players up by skill. Each coach then takes turn selecting players based on their skill level.

## 10. ROSTER GUIDELINES

- Deadlines must be adhered to! Any team that fails to submit a complete roster by the established deadline will **NOT** be entered into the league schedule. **A player must appear on the Official Roster submitted to the Youth Bureau to be eligible to participate in any game OR practice.**
- **Allowing a player who does not appear on your Rosters to participate is a violation of the Coaches’ Code of Conduct.**
- The Youth Bureau asks that rosters contain AT LEAST 2 more players than the minimum required to play the game.
- The Youth Bureau also recommends no more than twice as many as the number of players required to play appear on each roster when possible.
- Players CANNOT be listed on two county rosters; they may only play for one team.

*Note: ALL COACHES should be aware that if a team shows up with less than a sufficient number of players to ‘start’ the game, players may be ‘shared.’ This game will now be considered an ‘Official’ County sanctioned game and County Sports Officials are eligible to officiate these games!*

## 11. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- There is unlimited “Free Substitution” – however the player must return to the **SAME** place in the batting order.
- A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 10 batters at the Grasshopper and Pee Wee Levels and 9 at the Pony Level), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:
  - 10 Defensive Players and 2 EP's (extra players) at the Grasshopper and Pee Wee Levels
  - 9 Defensive Players and 3 EP's at the Pony Level
- Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes. The EP(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The EP(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different EP(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning).
- Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.
- Each team **MUST** have **8** players to start a Baseball or Softball Game. However, a team may finish a game with one player less than it started when a player is injured or becomes ill. Every "at bat" for that player will automatically be called an out. This to be done only when there is no other substitute available.

## **12. TOURNAMENT PARTICIPATION**

- By entering the County schedule it should be every team's **FIRST** priority to play these games.
- Games should be rescheduled ahead of time so that teams not participating in a tournament do not miss games.
- County games **MAY NOT** be played as a part of **ANY** tournament. Any game missed because of a tournament should be made up over the course of the season.
- Any games played at a tournament are not a part of the County schedule as we do not want to change the nature of our program. Changing a game should not pose a hardship to **EITHER** team. Umpires who decide to work at a tournament should note it is **NOT** recognized by the County Program. The County Rules may not be in effect, the County cannot assist with grievances and the County **WILL NOT** pay Officials for those games.

## **13. GAME CANCELLATIONS**

- It is not recommended that game dates be changed. However, rain outs, field conflicts, or other circumstances sometimes arise and changing game dates cannot be avoided. Be considerate to all involved.
- **YOU MUST NOTIFY THE YOUTH BUREAU BEFORE A RESCHEDULED GAME IS PLAYED**
- Make sure sufficient notice and reason is given to the opposition: 6:00 games should be cancelled no later than 4:00, 9:30 games should be cancelled no later than 8:00; a 24-hour notice is recommended when possible.
- The home team's coach is responsible for notifying the following people:
  1. Youth Bureau
  2. Your Area Coordinator
  3. Opposing Team's Coach
  4. The Scheduled County Official
- It is the home team's responsibility to reschedule cancelled games. All games must be rescheduled and played before the end of the season.

<p><b><u>UMPIRE NOTE:</u></b> Umpires should inform Town Coordinators as soon as possible when they have to miss an assigned game. Please try to give coordinators <b>AT LEAST 24 HOUR NOTICE. DO NOT “NO SHOW”!</b></p>
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## **14. GRACE PERIOD**

- There is a 15 minute grace period for game starting times in all leagues.
- Once the grace period expires, the game is declared a forfeit.
- To assist coaches and officials with pre-game schedule, the following should be used as a guideline. The most important time which must be adhered to is the time the game begins!

	<u>Weeknights</u>	<u>Weekends</u>
Home Team Takes Field	until 5:40	until 9:10
Visiting Team Takes Field	5:40--5:50	9:10--9:20
Umpires Cover Ground Rules	5:50--5:55	9:20--9:25
Home Team Takes Field	5:55	9:25
Game Begins	6:00	9:30

## 15. TIME LIMIT

- All County Youth Baseball/Softball games will have a 2-Hour Time Limit.
- No NEW inning will begin 2 or more hours after the scheduled start time (i.e. 8:00pm for a 6:00pm weeknight game and 11:30am for a 9:30am weekend game).
- **Once the 2-Hour Limit has been reached**
  1. If an inning has NOT begun (i.e. no pitch has been thrown) the inning will not be played – the game is over.
  2. If an inning has begun, both halves of that inning (if necessary; if the Time Limit has been reached and the home team is ahead, the bottom-half of the inning will not be completed) will be completed, however no new inning will begin after that point.
- **If a game does not begin on time the 2-hour time limit will NOT be extended.**

## 16. EQUIPMENT

- Uniforms are recommended, but we realize that uniforms are not affordable for all areas. Disregard both the baseball and softball rule books regarding uniform requirements.
- It is mandated for all County Baseball and Softball levels that each batter, runner, catcher and youth base coach wear head protection. The head protector shall be a type which has safety features equal to or greater than those provided by the full plastic cap, with padding on the inside. The head protector must have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and temples.
- The catcher must wear a helmet, mask with throat protector, body protector, protective cup (boys), and shin guards.
- NO metal cleats, spikes or shoes with detachable cleats are allowed in GHBB, GHSB, PWBB, PWSB, or PSB. Metal cleats are not recommended at the PBB level, but they are permissible.

## 17. 5 RUN RULE

- **There is a 5 Run Rule in affect for ALL LEVELS OF PLAY.**
- No more than 5 Runs can be scored in an inning. Once the 5th run of the inning crosses the plate, the half-inning will be over.
- The 5 Run Rule is waived off during both halves of the last inning.

## 18. HIT BATTERS

- A player's jersey or uniform is considered part of their body. If a pitched ball strikes clothing, the batter is awarded first base as a "hit batsmen".
- If the player is hit by the bounced pitch, it is a dead ball and the batter is awarded first base as a "hit batsmen".
- If a pitcher hits a batter, the Umpire and Coach should discuss whether or not the pitcher should be removed from any further pitching in that game due to safety considerations. The Umpire has the call as to whether or not that pitcher must relinquish the mound. Under all playing circumstances, it is up to the umpires' discretion to pull a pitcher BEFORE they hit another batter, if the umpire deems play is unsafe.
- Coaches should check over a hit batter before sending them down to first base. Injuries are not always readily observable or obvious.
- These rules apply at all levels of County play.

## 19. BUNTING

- Bunting is permitted at all levels of play.
- An unsuccessful Bunt attempt with two strikes on a batter will result in the batter being "out".

## 20. BAT THROWING

- A player who chronically ‘throws their bat’ should be warned the first time, called ‘out’ the second time and ‘benched’ the third time.
- If the first incident is severe enough, the umpire has the right to call the player ‘out’, then ‘warn them’. The next incidence would merit a ‘benching’.

## 21. COURTESY RUNNERS

- A team may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or catcher. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under the courtesy runner rule. This will speed up the game and reduce the delay between innings.
- The individual chosen as a Courtesy Runner must be a substitute not listed in the current batting order. If no substitutes are available the last batted out should serve as the Courtesy Runner.
- The same substitute may not be used as the Courtesy Runner for both the Pitcher and Catcher.
- Courtesy Runners should be used for injured players.

## 22. STEALING & SLIDING

- Sliding is permitted at **ALL LEVELS OF PLAY.**
- Any runner is out when he or she DOES NOT legally slide or attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him or her. If the action is intentional or illegal, the player will be immediately called out and ejected from the game.
- A player may advance home on a Passed Ball, Wild Pitch or overthrow at any level where stealing is permitted as this is not considered a “Stolen Base” however; **there is NO straight stealing of home at any level of play!**

## 23. DOUBLE FIRST BASE

- The Clinton County Youth Bureau Requires the use of a double first base at all County Softball levels, as per NFHS Softball rule. Rules governing the use of a double first base are included herein.
- When a batter hits the ball and attempts to advance to first base: If the ball is hit in the infield and a play will take place at first base, the batter-runner must tag the colored portion of first base, while the defensive player uses the white portion.
  1. When there is a force play at first base on the batter-runner, if the batter-runner touches only the white portion of the base AND collides or contacts the defensive player who is on the white portion of the base, the ball is DEAD! Interference is called. The batter- runner is out and all base runners must return to the 1<sup>st</sup> base occupied at the time of the interference.
  2. On a ball hit in the infield with a play occurring at first base, if a batter-runner touches only the white portion of the base and makes no contact with the defensive player, the defense may appeal the play only up until the moment that the runner re-touches the base (white or colored) after returning to the base. Once the batter-runner re-touches first base (either white or colored portion), no appeal is possible.
  3. When a ball is hit to the outfield and there is no play at first base on the batter-runner advancing to first base, the batter-runner may touch either the colored or the white portion of the double first base as they round the base. Should the batter-runner return to first base after rounding it, they can return to either the colored or white portion of the double base.
  4. When tagging up a fly ball, the base-runner at first base may tag up using either the colored or white portion of the double base.
  5. At any level of softball where stealing is allowed, on an attempted pick-off play, the base-runner may return to either the white or colored portion of the double first base.
  6. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion of the double first base is fair.
  7. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored portion of the double first base is foul.
- On an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul territory, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or colored portion of the double first base. Example: In Pony Softball, on a dropped third strike, if the ball rolls out into foul territory to the right of the

catcher, the first baseman should switch to playing the colored portion of the double first base and the batter-runner can then legally tag the white portion. This keeps the defense and offense separated, reducing the likelihood of contact. It also eliminates the need to throw the ball across the path of the batter-runner.

- Use of a Double First Base is permitted for all levels of County Baseball, however it is not required.

#### **24. INFIELD FLY RULE**

- Is in effect with runners on 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd and 3rd with less than two outs. - The infield fly rule may be called on a fly ball in the infield (fair territory) that could be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (reasonably catchable).
- The batter is automatically out as a result, and the ball remains in play. Base runners may leave the bag and advance at their own risk.
- The infield fly rule cannot be in effect during a bunted ball.
- If unsure whether or not the ball will be fair or foul, the infield fly rule still may be called. If the ball is dropped or not caught and lands foul, the ball is simply a foul ball and the batter is not out. If the infield fly rule is called and the ball lands foul and rolls fair, the infield fly rule is in effect.
- **The Infield Fly Rule does not apply at the Grasshopper Levels.**

#### **25. DROPPED THIRD STRIKE RULE**

- With less than two outs it is in effect only if 1st base is unoccupied.
- With two outs 1st base can be occupied.
- If the batter swings at a pitch for the third strike or a ball is a “called strike” but is not cleanly handled by the catcher, the batter may legally try to reach first base before being either tagged or forced out at first base (fielder touches first base with the ball). This is a force out, so if the final out of the innings results in a dropped third strike, any runs do not count.
- **The Dropped Third Strike Rule only applies at the Pony Levels**

## **GRASSHOPPER BASEBALL**

<b>FIELD REGULATIONS:</b>	Pitching – 40 ft. Bases – 60 ft.
<b>REGULATION GAME:</b>	6 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.
<b>SUBSTITUTION:</b>	Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.
<b>RULE BOOK:</b>	Little League Rule Book
<b>OFFICIAL:</b>	One County paid/certified Umpire assigned by the Coordinator; positioned behind the plate.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.

- PLAYERS:** A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 10 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:
- 10 Defensive Players and 2 EP's (extra players) at the Grasshopper Level. Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.
- The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The "EP"(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different "EP"(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning). The 10th fielder may be used in an Outfield Position ONLY.
- Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.
- BAT:** Bats that meet the USABat Youth Bat Standard and have a USA Baseball Stamp (visit usabats.com for a complete list of approved bats) will be acceptable for any County sanctioned Grasshopper or Pee Wee Baseball Game. Bats that do not have the USA Baseball Stamp must be no more than 42 inches in length and no more than 2.61 inches in diameter. Wooden Bats that are solid and one-piece will be permissible provided they are no more than 42 inches in length, no more than 2.61 inches in diameter and no less than 15/16 inches in diameter.
- HELMET:** All County Baseball teams must be equipped with enough helmets outfitted with facemasks so any youth wishing to use one may do so at any given moment. (4 helmets per team).
- STEALING:** Is not permitted at the Grasshopper Baseball Level.
- If a player leaves the base, a warning will be given to that team for the first offense. The second offense will result in the runner being called "out" and a "no pitch" for the batter.
- INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Grasshopper Baseball level.
- DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Grasshopper Baseball Level.
- PITCHER:** A youth pitcher may pitch no more than 2 innings in a game. A youth pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in a calendar week-- Sunday through Saturday.
- YOUTH & ADULT PITCHING:** The coach will pitch innings 1, 3 and 5 of the game and the youth will pitch innings 2, 4 and 6.
- A player may be called out on strikes when either the Coach **OR** Youth is pitching.
- A player may be awarded 1st base by being walked or hit by pitch **ONLY** when the youth is pitching.
- A coach or adult will pitch innings 1, 3 and 5 of the game to their own team according to the following:

1. The adult cannot play defense. The umpire must call balls and strikes. If an adult fields a batted or thrown live ball, the lead runner is automatically out and a dead ball is called. During adult pitching there will be no walks or hit by pitch.
2. In the event that an adult pitcher is hit by a batted ball, it is a dead ball – no pitch. Base runners must return to their bases.
3. The adult pitcher has the option to pitch from or behind the pitcher’s mound; whichever seems most comfortable.
4. It is up to the umpire’s discretion to warn or call a coach on pitching illegal or inappropriate (‘lob balls’) to their team.

*\*Note: The Coach Pitcher must have a Code of Conduct on file with the Youth Bureau.*

## **GRASSHOPPER SOFTBALL**

<b>FIELD REGULATIONS:</b>	Pitching – 30 ft. Bases – 60 ft.
<b>REGULATION GAME:</b>	6 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.
<b>SUBSTITUTION:</b>	Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.
<b>RULE BOOK:</b>	NFHS Official Softball Rule Book.
<b>OFFICIAL:</b>	One County paid/certified Umpire assigned by the Coordinator; positioned behind the plate.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.

- PLAYERS:** A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 10 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:
- 10 Defensive Players and 2 EP's (extra players) at the Grasshopper Level. Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.
- The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The "EP"(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different "EP"(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning). The 10th fielder may be used in an Outfield Position ONLY.
- Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.
- GAME BALL:** The use of the RIF (Reduced Impact Factor) softballs is mandated at the Grasshopper Softball Level. Game ball will be the R-11WL Level 10, 11 inch RIF ball.
- BAT:** Any bat that meets the ASA specifications for Softball will be acceptable in any County sanctioned Grasshopper, Pee Wee or Pony Softball game. Refer to the NFHS Softball Rule Book – specifications state that the bat shall be no more than 34 inches in length and 2 ¼ inches in diameter and shall not exceed 38.0 ounces in weight.
- HELMET:** All batters and base runners at the Grasshopper, Pee Wee and Pony Softball levels are required to wear a helmet outfitted with a protective facemask.
- STEALING:** Is not permitted at the Grasshopper Softball Level.
- If a player leaves the base, a warning will be given to that team for the first offense. The second offense will result in the runner being called "out" and a "no pitch" for the batter.
- INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Grasshopper Softball level.
- DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Grasshopper Softball Level.
- PITCHER:** Grasshopper Softball pitchers may use the 'windmill' pitching style. There is no limit to the number of innings a Grasshopper Softball pitcher may pitch in a game or a given week. If a pitcher hits 4 batters, they should be removed from any further pitching in that game
- Once the pitcher has begun her motion, she may not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front of the foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground.
- YOUTH & ADULT PITCHING:** The coach will pitch innings 1, 3 and 5 of the game and the youth will pitch innings 2, 4 and 6.

A player may be called out on strikes when either the Coach **OR** Youth is pitching.

A player may be awarded 1st base by being walked or hit by pitch **ONLY** when the youth is pitching.

A coach or adult will pitch innings 1, 3 and 5 of the game to their own team according to the following:

1. The adult cannot play defense. The umpire must call balls and strikes. If an adult fields a batted or thrown live ball, the lead runner is automatically out and a dead ball is called. During adult pitching there will be no walks or hit by pitch.
2. In the event that an adult pitcher is hit by a batted ball, it is a dead ball – no pitch. Base runners must return to their bases.
3. The adult pitcher has the option to pitch from or behind the pitcher's mound; whichever seems most comfortable.
4. It is up to the umpire's discretion to warn or call a coach on pitching illegal or inappropriate ('lob balls') to their team.

*\*Note: The Coach Pitcher must have a Code of Conduct on file with the Youth Bureau.*

## **PEE WEE BASEBALL**

<b>FIELD REGULATIONS:</b>	Pitching – 46 ft. Bases – 60 ft.
<b>REGULATION GAME:</b>	6 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.
<b>SUBSTITUTION:</b>	Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.
<b>RULE BOOK:</b>	Little League Rule Book
<b>OFFICIAL:</b>	Two County paid/certified Umpires assigned by the Coordinator; one positioned behind the plate, one positioned behind the base path.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.

- PLAYERS:** A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 10 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:
- 10 Defensive Players and 2 EP's (extra players) at the Pee Wee Level. Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.
- The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The "EP"(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different "EP"(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning). The 10th fielder may be used in an Outfield Position ONLY.
- Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.
- BAT:** Bats that meet the USABat Youth Bat Standard and have a USA Baseball Stamp (visit usabats.com for a complete list of approved bats) will be acceptable for any County sanctioned Grasshopper or Pee Wee Baseball Game. Bats that do not have the USA Baseball Stamp must be no more than 42 inches in length and no more than 2.61 inches in diameter. Wooden Bats that are solid and one-piece will be permissible provided they are no more than 42 inches in length, no more than 2.61 inches in diameter and no less than 15/16 inches in diameter.
- HELMET:** All County Baseball teams must be equipped with enough helmets outfitted with facemasks so any youth wishing to use one may do so at any given moment. (4 helmets per team).
- STEALING:** May not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. If the base runner stops, or is clearly not advancing, when the catcher releases the ball to the pitcher (who is in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate), and the pitcher catches the ball, the play is ruled dead and all runner(s) are returned to the last base legally touched. If the pitcher does not catch the ball or have possession of the ball while in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate, the ball remains live and the base runners may advance. If a base runner leaves too soon, an "out" is called and also a "no pitch".
- A player may advance home on a Passed Ball, Wild Pitch or overthrow at any level where stealing is permitted as this is not considered a "Stolen Base" however; there is NO STRAIGHT STEALING OF HOME at any level of play!
- INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pee Wee Baseball level.
- DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Pee Wee Baseball Level.
- PITCHER:** A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 6 innings in a calendar week – Sunday through Saturday. If a pitcher pitches in 4 or more innings, 2 calendar days of rest are required. If a player pitches in less than 4 innings, 1 calendar day of rest is required. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes an inning of pitching.
- If a pitcher hits 3 batters, the Umpire and Coach should discuss whether or not the pitcher should be removed from any further pitching in that game due

to safety considerations. After 4 hit batsmen, the Umpire has the call as to whether or not that pitcher must relinquish the mound. Under all playing circumstances, it is up to the umpires discretion to pull a pitcher BEFORE they hit a third batter, if the umpire deems safety requires.

**CURVE BALLS:** No curve balls are allowed, penalty will be awarded to the batter.

## PEE WEE SOFTBALL

**FIELD REGULATIONS:** Pitching – 35 ft.  
Bases – 60 ft.

**REGULATION GAME:** 6 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.

**SUBSTITUTION:** Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.

**RULE BOOK:** NFHS Official Softball Rule Book.

**OFFICIAL:** Two County paid/certified Umpires assigned by the Coordinator; one positioned behind the plate, one positioned behind the base path.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.

**PLAYERS:** A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 10 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:

10 Defensive Players and 2 EP's (extra players) at the Pee Wee Level.  
Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.

The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The "EP"(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different "EP"(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning). The 10th fielder may be used in an Outfield Position ONLY.

Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.

**GAME BALL:** Will be an 11 inch Softball.

**BAT:** Any bat that meets the ASA specifications for Softball will be acceptable in any County sanctioned Grasshopper, Pee Wee or Pony Softball game. Refer to the NFHS Softball Rule Book – specifications state that the bat shall be no more than 34 inches in length and 2 ¼ inches in diameter and shall not exceed 38.0 ounces in weight.

- HELMET:** All batters and base runners at the Grasshopper, Pee Wee and Pony Softball levels are required to wear a helmet outfitted with a protective facemask.
- STEALING:** May not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. If the base runner stops, or is clearly not advancing, when the catcher releases the ball to the pitcher (who is in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate), and the pitcher catches the ball, the play is ruled dead and all runner(s) are returned to the last base legally touched. If the pitcher does not catch the ball or have possession of the ball while in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate, the ball remains live and the base runners may advance. If a base runner leaves too soon, an "out" is called and also a "no pitch".
- A player may advance home on a Passed Ball, Wild Pitch or overthrow at any level where stealing is permitted as this is not considered a "Stolen Base" however; there is **NO STRAIGHT STEALING OF HOME** at any level of play!
- INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pee Wee Softball level.
- DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule is NOT IN EFFECT at the Pee Wee Softball Level.
- PITCHER:** Pee Wee Softball pitchers may use the 'windmill' pitching style. There is no limit to the number of innings a Pee Wee Softball pitcher may pitch in a game or a given week.
- Once the pitcher has begun her motion, she may not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front of the foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground.
- If a pitcher hits 3 batters the Umpire and Coach should discuss whether or not the pitcher should be removed from any further pitching in that game due to safety considerations. After 4 hit batsmen, the Umpire has the call as to whether or not that pitcher must relinquish the mound. Under all playing circumstances, it is up to the umpires discretion to pull a pitcher **BEFORE** they hit a third batter, if the umpire deems safety requires.

# PONY BASEBALL

<b>FIELD REGULATIONS:</b>	Pitching – 60 ft. 6 in. Bases – 90 ft.
<b>REGULATION GAME:</b>	7 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.
<b>SUBSTITUTION:</b>	Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.
<b>RULE BOOK:</b>	NFHS Official Baseball Rulebook
<b>OFFICIAL:</b>	Two County paid/certified Umpires assigned by the Coordinator; one positioned behind the plate, one positioned behind the base path.
<b>WARM-UP PITCHES:</b>	The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.
<b>PLAYERS:</b>	<p>A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 9 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:</p> <p>9 Defensive Players and 3 EP's (extra players) at the Pony Level. Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.</p> <p>The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change. The "EP"(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different "EP"(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning).</p> <p>Opposing teams do not have to select the same option.</p>
<b>BAT:</b>	All bats used at the Pony Baseball Level not made of a single piece of wood shall meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) performance standard and such bats shall be labeled with a silkscreen or other permanent certification mark to read: "BBCOR .50." Any bat that does not bare the BBCOR .50 mark or is not made of a single piece of wood will not be permitted for use in the County's Pony Baseball Program.
<b>HELMET:</b>	All County Baseball teams must be equipped with enough helmets outfitted with facemasks so any youth wishing to use one may do so at any given moment. (4 helmets per team).
<b>STEALING:</b>	Follows NFHS Rules; player may steal at any time. If the base runner stops, or is clearly not advancing, when the catcher releases the ball to the pitcher (who is in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate), and the pitcher catches the ball, the play is ruled dead and all runner(s) are returned to the last base legally touched. If the pitcher does not catch the ball or have possession of the ball while in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate, the ball remains live and the base runners may advance. If a base runner leaves too soon, an "out" is called and also a "no pitch".

A player may advance home on a Passed Ball, Wild Pitch or overthrow at any level where stealing is permitted as this is not considered a “Stolen Base” however; there is NO STRAIGHT STEALING OF HOME at any level of play!

**INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pony Baseball level.

**DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pony Baseball Level.

**PITCHER:** A player may pitch a maximum of seven innings in a calendar week – Sunday through Saturday. If they pitch less than 4 innings, they must rest one calendar day. If they pitch 4 or more innings, 2 calendar days of rest are required.

Anyone who turns 16 before August 1<sup>st</sup> cannot pitch at the Pony Baseball Level.

**BALK RULES:** NFHS Balk Rules apply.

## PONY SOFTBALL

**FIELD REGULATIONS:** Pitching – 40 ft.  
Bases – 60 ft.

**REGULATION GAME:** 7 Innings. If a game is tied after regulation it remains a tie.

**SUBSTITUTION:** Re-entry is allowed as long as the player returns to their original spot in the batting order.

**RULE BOOK:** NFHS Official Softball Rule Book.

**OFFICIAL:** Two County paid/certified Umpires assigned by the Coordinator; one positioned behind the plate, one positioned behind the base path.

**WARM-UP PITCHES:** The starting pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches. Every inning following the first pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches to be completed within a minute of the final out of the preceding inning. A relief pitcher gets 8 pitches.

**PLAYERS:** A team has the option of using a straight lineup (which includes 9 batters), or they may use up to 12 batters in the batting order:

9 Defensive Players and 3 EP's (extra players) at the Pony Level.  
Players beyond the 12 starting players will be listed as substitutes.

The "EP"(s) can be used on defense at any time without reporting a change.  
The “EP”(s) not playing defense are to change each inning (i.e. you are to have different “EP”(s) on the bench each defensive half-inning).

Opposing teams do not have to select the same optio

- GAME BALL:** Will be a 12 inch Softball.
- BAT:** Any bat that meets the ASA specifications for Softball will be acceptable in any County sanctioned Grasshopper, Pee Wee or Pony Softball game. Refer to the NFHS Softball Rule Book – specifications state that the bat shall be no more than 34 inches in length and 2 ¼ inches in diameter and shall not exceed 38.0 ounces in weight.
- HELMET:** All batters and base runners at the Grasshopper, Pee Wee and Pony Softball levels are required to wear a helmet outfitted with a protective facemask.
- STEALING:** A player may steal when the ball is released from the Pitcher’s hand. If the base runner stops, or is clearly not advancing, when the catcher releases the ball to the pitcher (who is in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate), and the pitcher catches the ball, the play is ruled dead and all runner(s) are returned to the last base legally touched. If the pitcher does not catch the ball or have possession of the ball while in the vicinity of the pitcher's plate, the ball remains live and the base runners may advance. If a base runner leaves too soon, an “out” is called and also a “no pitch”.
- A player may advance home on a Passed Ball, Wild Pitch or overthrow at any level where stealing is permitted as this is not considered a “Stolen Base” however; there is NO STRAIGHT STEALING OF HOME at any level of play!
- INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pony Softball level.
- DROPPED 3<sup>RD</sup> STRIKE:** The Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule IS IN EFFECT at the Pony Softball Level.
- PITCHER:** Pony Softball pitchers may use the ‘windmill’ pitching style. There is no limit to the number of innings a Pony Softball pitcher may pitch in a game or a given week.
- Once the pitcher has begun her motion, she may not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front of the foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground.
- If a pitcher hits 3 batters the Umpire and Coach should discuss whether or not the pitcher should be removed from any further pitching in that game due to safety considerations. After 4 hit batsmen, the Umpire has the call as to whether or not that pitcher must relinquish the mound. Under all playing circumstances, it is up to the umpires discretion to pull a pitcher BEFORE they hit a third batter, if the umpire deems safety requires.
- Anyone who turns 16 before August 1<sup>st</sup> cannot pitch at the Pony Softball Level.

# Prerequisites for Good Umpiring:

## General Expectations of Umpires

1. Proper Attire and Neat Appearance
  - Uniform shirt, ball and strike indicator & equipment
2. Acting Professional and Alert
  - Pay close attention
  - Know where the ball is at all times
  - Act like you want to be there
3. Get to the field early
  - Get to the field 15 minutes before the start with all equipment
4. Make calls loud and assertive
  - Both dugouts should be able to hear you at all times when making a call
5. Hustle into position on each play
  - Appropriate positioning will help you make the right calls
6. Good, Consistent Mechanics (PAUSE, READ, REACT)
  - Run to the play
  - Stop and view the play
  - Think about the call
  - Make an assertive call with sharp, visible signals

## **General Reminders:**

- Personal appearance is invaluable. It is required you dress appropriately for the job. County Umpires must wear the shirt issued at certification clinic while officiating. No jeans, bright-colored hats or sandals are permitted. **Since you are a paid employee of Clinton County, if a member of the Recreation Staff attends a game in which you are dressed inappropriately you may be asked to leave.**
- **Plate Umpire Standard Equipment:**
  1. Ball and strike indicator.
  2. Small whisk broom or paint brush.
  3. Chest protector and sturdy mask, with a throat protector and shin guards.
    - **Base Umpire** should have a ball and strike indicator.

## **The Effective Umpire:**

- Decisions must be made positively and promptly. An umpire **has to run** to get into position to make a good call. They stop where they can see all the action clearly before making a ruling, do not make a call on the run! Know exactly where the ball is at all times. A strong voice is an asset. All calls should be made loudly and clearly so that players of both teams can hear them; especially when calling balls and strikes, foul balls and dead balls.
- Good umpiring is dependent (to a large extent) upon a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules and proper positioning.
- An umpire must ignore remarks from the crowd and spectators. Do not let stray comments affect your judgment.
- The efficient umpire will not make a spectacle of his/her position.
- Umpires must be courteous to players and coaches, but avoid visiting with them immediately before or during the game. Any discussion should be brief.
- The judgment necessary in making a decision is acquired through experience. Rule on the play exactly as it was seen. You will make mistakes. NEVER attempt to "even things up". Learn from your mistakes to become a better umpire next time.
- Umpires working together must have a mutual respect for each other. Support each other; don't be afraid to ask opinions of each other. That being said; **DO NOT** openly disagree with your partner on calls. If a

call is in question, umpires should meet briefly to discuss the call. The umpire who's "call" it is will make final ruling when an agreement cannot be made.

### Dealing with Problems:

- As an umpire you may come across situations where a behavior (or behaviors) is deemed inappropriate for the County Baseball/Softball Program. As the umpire you must address these issues with the County coaches.
  - The County Umpire (or Umpires) should meet with both the Home and Away coach when addressing issues
  - The County Umpire only deals directly with the County Coaches. Issues with Assistant Coaches, Score Keepers, Players, Parents or Spectators should be addressed with the County Coach.
  - The issue(s) should be spelled out clearly for the coaches and an opportunity to make changes and continue the game should be given. If the issue is then resolved the game can continue as planned. Should the issue not be resolved two choices should be given to the coach; change the behavior or end the game.
  - Umpires always have the choice to end a game because of inappropriate behavior. Any time a game is ended because of behavior an Unsportsmanlike Conduct Report Form should be completed and returned to the Youth Bureau Office.

	DO's	DONT's
1	Keep poise through trying situations.	Carry on idle conversations with coaches, players, parents or referees when the game does not require it.
2	Hustle during each game (angle, distance and timing are important).	Assume that you can make accurate calls standing in one position.
3	Have the desire to make the right calls (hustle and be open to learning from mistakes).	Get angry at coaches or players for being upset with the outcome of a play.
4	Stay in control of the game, even when emotions run high during the game.	Allow a bad call to persuade future calls.
5	If you are uncertain about a call, ask your other umpire for assistance.	If a coach is asking you a question or discussing a call made, ignore him until he goes away.
6	Stay active and alert at all times during a game.	Go into each game thinking you know all of the rules because you have played before.
7	Make calls loud, assertive and with the proper signals.	Mumble calls so only the player next to you can hear you.
8	Explain the calls you make to the players learning the sport, they are looking to you as a teacher as well.	Justify why you made a call to ANYONE. You can explain as a teaching tool but you do not need to justify your calls to ANYONE!

# OFFICIATING COUNTY YOUTH BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

## I. PRE-GAME:

**A. Dressed and ready to officiate at the site 15 minutes before the start of your game.**

**B. Inspect the field.**

1. Are there any possible safety hazards?
2. Are the bases secured?
3. Could the ball fit under any of the fences?

**C. Meet with Coaches (both Umpires).**

1. Ask both coaches:

a. *"Are your players legally and properly equipped and will they remain so for the duration of the competition?"*

**\*\* By asking you do not need to check each player or piece of equipment individually. If you notice any illegal equipment during the game it must be addressed immediately. You do not have to check bats unless a coach has a question about the legality (refer to the League/Level Rule pages for bat specifications).**

b. *"Do you ensure that your teams exhibit respect and good sportsmanship?"*

c. *"Have all of your assistant coaches signed and returned the Code of Conduct?"*

2. Go over "Ground Rules"

- a. What are the foul markers?
- b. What are the out of play markers?
- c. Hills, fences or other obstacles and their rulings

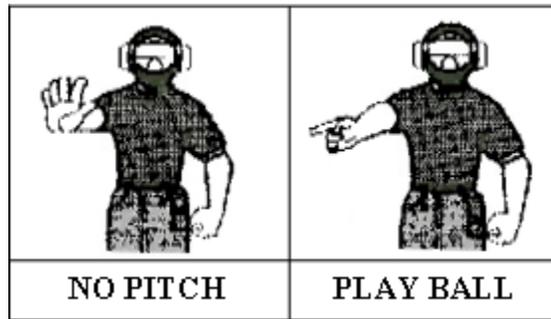
**E. Check the game ball.**

1. Make sure it is the correct size.
  - a. Baseball
  - b. Grasshopper Softball – RIF 11" Softball
  - c. Pee Wee Softball – 11" Softball
  - d. Pony Softball – 12" Softball
2. Make sure you have a few back-ups available.

## II. DURING THE GAME:

**A. Starting the Game**

1. The home team will take the field first. During warm-ups the Plate Umpire should be positioned on the base-path closest to the dugout of the team in the field. The Field Umpire should be positioned just outside of the infield between first and second bases.
2. The Pitcher will receive 8 warm-up pitches in the 1<sup>st</sup> inning. Each inning after that will allow for 5 warm-up pitches.
3. The Plate Umpire should position themselves behind home plate after the last warm-up pitch. The Field Umpire should be positioned on the foul line, directly behind first base.
4. The Plate Umpire will call "Batter Up"
5. A game cannot be started until the Plate Umpire motions to the pitcher and calls "Play"

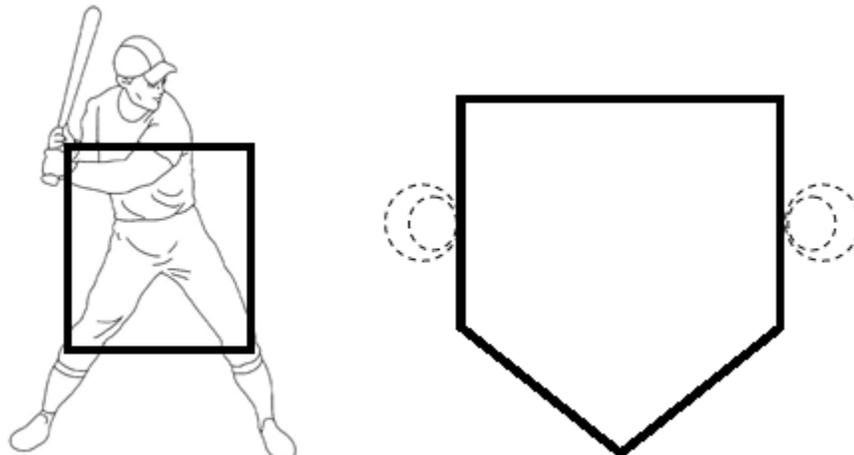


- a. This also applies for every dead ball during the course of the game
- b. “Time” can only be called by an Umpire, NOT a coach or player (no umpire should call time while a play is still in progress).
- c. The ball can only be back in play when the pitcher has the ball in hand or steps on the rubber or when the Plate Umpire calls “play”.
- d. Hidden Ball Trick: if the umpire thinks the pitcher has the ball and calls “play,” then realizes someone else has the ball, no play can be made, since the ball was not legally in play yet! The only way a “Hidden Ball Trick” can work is if ‘Time’ was never called in the first place.

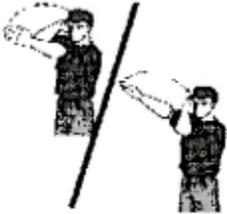
## B. The Batter

### 1. Balls & Strikes

- a. The Plate Umpire will call Balls and Strikes. The Field Umpire should keep track of the count and number of outs on every play.
- b. The strike zone is the space over home plate which is between the batter’s chest (letters on the jersey) and the top of their knees. It should also be extended one “Ball Length” inside and outside the plate. A ball that bounces before reaching Home Plate can ONLY be ruled a strike if the batter swings.



- c. Proper strike call mechanics make a difference, when the ball hits the catcher's glove say strike or ball loud enough to be heard while making the proper hand signal.
- d. Foul Tip: Where a pitch is deflected by the bat into the catcher's glove.
  - i. Call a strike and signal the Foul Tip signal (brush off signal). This is not a foul ball!
  - ii. The ball remains live (in play) and runner can advance at their own risk (runners can steal)

	<p><b>There is no signal for BALL. You simply verbalize "Ball"</b></p>	
<p><b>STRIKE</b></p>		<p><b>FOUL TIP</b></p>

- e. Be Consistent with Balls and Strikes. Strike Zones may change depending on age level. Younger levels may require a larger strike zone. The key is to be **consistent** with both teams!
  - f. Do not verbalize "you're out" or "take your base" on strikeouts or walks simply say "strike three" or "ball four".
  - g. Keep track of the count after each pitch (verbally express the count to players and coaches when appropriate).
  - h. An attempted bunt with two strikes that results in a foul ball is considered a third strike. The batter is out.
2. Hit Batter
- a. Rule immediately on a ball that hit the batter, while the batter is in the box.
  - b. If the Batter swings and the ball touches them without the ball contacting the bat first, the pitch is ruled a strike and a dead ball.
  - c. If the batter is hit by a pitch that is in the strike zone, the pitch is ruled a strike, not a dead ball (the batter does not get first base).
  - d. The Batter's uniform is considered part of their body.
  - e. A ball that bounces then hits a batter is ruled Hit by Pitch. Batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> Base.
3. Catcher's Obstruction
- a. If the hitter's bat touches the catcher's glove or equipment during a swing the Plate Umpire should signal Delayed Dead Ball.
    - i. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely and if all other runners have advanced at least one base, catcher obstruction is cancelled. All actions as a result of that play stand; no option is given.
    - ii. Otherwise, the Plate Umpire should inform the coach of the obstruction. The coach has the option to take the result of the

play, or have the obstruction enforced by awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.

4. Dropped Third Strike

- a. With less than two outs it is in effect only if 1st base is unoccupied. With two outs 1st base can be occupied.
- b. If the batter swings at a pitch for the third strike or a ball is a “called strike” but is not cleanly handled by the catcher, the batter may legally try to reach first base before being either tagged or forced out at first base (fielder touches first base with the ball). This is a force out, so if the final out of the innings results in a dropped third strike, any runs do not count.
- c. **The Dropped Third Strike Rule only applies to the Pony Level.**

		
DEAD BALL	COUNT	DELAYED DEAD BALL

C. The Batted Ball

1. Fair & Foul Balls

- a. A ball is in fair territory if any part of it is on or over any part of the foul line.
  - i. A ball which stops rolling before it reaches first or third base is judged in regards to where it lies when it stops.
  - ii. A ball which is touched before it reaches the base is judged in regard to its position when touched.
  - iii. A ball which bounds (i.e. ground balls) into the outfield past first or third base is judged relative to the base when it passes the base. If any part of the ball passes over the base it is a fair ball, regardless of where it is played in the outfield.
  - iv. A ball which is hit to the outfield in the air is judged based on where the ball is when it is touched or hits the ground.
  - v. If any part of the ball hits the foul pole, it is a fair ball.
  - vi. **Judged on the position of the BALL, not the position of the fielder.**
  - vii. If the ball hits home plate, it's a fair ball.
  - viii. A batted ball that hits the batter or bat is a foul ball
- b. Plate Umpire
  - i. Make fair/foul calls from home to first and home to third, up to and touching the bag, as well as a bouncing ball over the bag. Make foul calls loudly and indicate all foul tips. There is no

verbalization of a fair ball, simply point into fair territory.

- ii. Rule on fair/foul balls the hit beyond the bases (all the way to the fence) IF the field umpire is positioned inside the diamond.

c. Field Umpire

- i. Rule on fair/foul balls only when positioned on the First Base Line (no runners on or runner on third only) AND the call is on the First Base Line.

	<b>Umpires should CLEARLY and LOUDLY say FOUL BALL. You do not verbalize FAIR BALL, simply point to fair territory</b>	
<b>FOUL BALL</b>		<b>FAIR BALL</b>

2. Ground Balls

a. Plate Umpire

- i. Rule on Safe & Out Calls at Home Plate
- ii. Be prepared and alert to make calls on the field if the field umpire is unsure about the outcome of the play on the field.

b. Field Umpire

- i. Rule Safe & Out calls on First, Second & Third Base. (See **Positioning Page**)
- ii. Be prepared to make calls at any base (if you are unsure about a call, you may discuss the call with the plate umpire or ask the plate umpire for a ruling).
- iii. Be sure to be in the appropriate position to make calls (HUSTLE on every play!). Get into position to “see the tag.”

	
<b>OUT</b>	<b>SAFE</b>

3. Fly Balls

a. Plate Umpire

- i. On all routine fly balls the Plate Umpire will move out into the area ahead of home plate when no runners are on base and shout "out" so the other umpire can hear him.

- ii. Field Umpire will rule on Catch or No Catch on ALL other fly balls
- iii. Be prepared and alert to make calls on the field if the Field Umpire is unsure about the outcome of the play on the field.
- iv. Plate Umpire can rule on fly balls along each foul line when Field Umpire is positioned centrally if agreed upon with both umpires ahead of time.
- v. When the Field Umpire moves to the outfield to rule on a possible trap, the Plate Umpire must rule on plays at all bases and should move out ahead of home plate where he/she can see all plays.

b. Field Umpire

- i. Rule Catch or No Catch on ALL fly balls
- ii. Responsibility on fly balls with no runners -- The Field Umpire must be prepared to rule on trapped balls hit to the outfield.
- iii. The Field Umpire moves into the infield. If the ball is dropped, he/she then checks to see if the batter-runner tags first, checks for obstruction, and then moves for possible play at first or second. When the Field Umpire moves to the outfield to rule on a possible trap, the Plate Umpire must rule on plays at all bases and should move out ahead of home plate where he can see all plays.

4. Infield Fly Rule

- i. Is in effect with runners on 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd and 3rd with less than two outs. - The infield fly rule may be called on a fly ball in the infield (fair territory) that could be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (reasonably catchable).
- ii. The call must be made while the ball is in the air, the batter is automatically out as a result, and the ball remains in play. Base runners may leave the bag and advance at their own risk.
- iii. The infield fly rule cannot be in effect during a bunted ball.
- iv. Either Umpire can call the Infield Fly Rule
- v. If the umpire is unsure whether or not the ball will be fair or foul, the infield fly rule still may be called. Simply verbalize "infield fly if fair". If the ball is dropped or not caught and lands foul, the ball is simply a foul ball and the batter is not out. If the infield fly rule is called and the ball lands foul and rolls fair, the infield fly rule is in effect.
- vi. **The Infield Fly Rule does not apply to the Grasshopper Level.**

		
CATCH/OUT	NO CATCH	INFIELD FLY

#### D. Base Runners

1. Batted Ball Hits Runner (ground ball, line drive or fly ball)
  - a. Runner is out only if the ball touches him or her without being contacted by a fielder AND with no other infielders having a reasonable chance to make a play on the ball.
  - b. Once the ball is deflected by an infielder, the runner cannot be called out unless he/she makes a deliberate attempt to interfere with the ball.
2. Running Out of the Baseline
  - a. Any runner is out when running more than three feet away from a direct base line between bases to avoid being tagged, unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.
  - b. This rule does not apply if the fielder does not have the ball and the runner runs outside the three-foot line. This is because the runner is not trying to avoid a tag.
3. Appeals
  - a. Appeals can be made by either team if they think the runner missed a base, on a check swing, etc.
    - i. For an appeal to be granted, the ball must be in play and before the next pitch, subsequent play, or any attempted play.
    - ii. **\*As an umpire do not give away the fact that a runner has missed a base, you may only make a ruling after the opposing team has requested an appeal appropriately\***
4. Obstruction
  - a. An act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding the ball, impedes a runner. It does not matter if the obstruction was intentional or not.
    - i. Runner obstruction while the play is being made on him (could occur in a rundown, while a fielder is trying to put him out, during a ground ball before the batter reaches 1st base, etc...).

**WHAT TO DO:** Call Time (if a fly ball, call time after the ball has been caught/dropped), point to the play and announce “obstruction.” Impose penalties, if any, and direct runners to bases (the runner who was obstructed gets one additional base past the last one he legally touched).

- ii. Runner obstruction while the play is not being directly made on him (could be while the ball is in the outfield, while a play is

being made on another player, during catcher's interference, etc...).

**WHAT TO DO:** Point laterally at the obstructions and announce "Obstruction," but allow the live play to continue. At the end of the play call 'Time' and impose penalties, if any, and direct runners to appropriate bases. Obstructed runners do NOT receive an EXTRA base. If the obstructed runner was out on the play, he is awarded that base safely.

#### **E. Other**

##### 1. Balk

- a. An illegal act by the pitcher with runner(s) on base.
  - i. The rule is meant to protect the runner(s) against being deceived by the pitcher. In short, a pitcher cannot bluff a throw in one direction and throw in another in order to deceive the runner(s).
  - ii. This call can only be made with runners on base and the umpire should announce "balk."
- b. The penalty is always one base for each runner on and the pitch does not count ("no pitch").
- c. If the player delivers the pitch and the batter swings and makes contact, the offensive team may elect to take the play or accept the balk award (typically whatever works in their favor). If the batter misses, there is no pitch and the balk penalty is in play
- d. Balk rules ONLY apply to Pony Baseball.**

##### 2. Softball

- a. Although there are several similarities between the rules in baseball and softball, there are some noticeable differences that should be understood.
  - i. A runner is out if that runner fails to maintain contact with the base which that runner is entitled until the ball has been batted or crosses the plate.
  - ii. While the pitcher has possession of the ball within 8 feet of the pitching rubber, the runner must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or return to the base the runner was before the play.
  - iii. No side-arm pitches are permitted at any level (the wrist must not be further from the body than the elbow is).
  - iv. No BALKS in Softball.
  - v. A dropped ball is a ball which slips from the pitcher's hand during delivery to the plate. A ball will be declared towards the batter's count and the ball is considered live (batters may advance at their own risk).
  - vi. When delivering a pitch, the pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground throughout her entire delivery. (Both feet cannot be off the ground at the same time)

- vii. The pitcher must present the ball to the batter/umpire (remove or show the ball outside of the glove) during their wind-up.

**III. AFTER THE GAME**

**A. Umpires should get Pay Vouchers signed by the Home Coach**

**B. Umpires should leave the field together**