

# OZ PARK BASEBALL

## ASSOCIATION

### 5U Age Division

#### 2026 Baseball Rules of Play – as of 4/01/26

*Please note that in addition to the below rules and regulations, all players, coaches and parents must abide by the OPBA Code of Conduct.*

*The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) baseball rules, as printed in the current National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Book, shall act as the basis of the Oz Park Baseball Association except for any revisions and additions as stated herein. To the extent any conflicts exist between the IHSA rules and these OPBA rules, the OPBA rules shall prevail.*

#### I. OPBA League Age Divisions

Whatever a player's age is on August 31st immediately following the summer of play determines the player's Age Division. For example, if a player turns 7 on August 31, 2026, then that player is in the 7-Year-Old Division for the 2026 Spring/Summer. If a player turns 7 on September 1, 2026, then that player is in the 6-Year-Old Division for the 2026 Spring/Summer.

#### II. General League Rules and Conduct for All Age Divisions

1. All players, coaches, parents, and fans shall show good sportsmanship at all times – no chirping, bragging, trash-talking or taunting at any time.
2. **There will be no umpires and volunteer coaches run the games. Only the coaches decide if players are safe or out.**
3. At the end of the game, both teams will line up on their respective foul line to tip their caps to each other or shake hands. Again, NO chirping or bragging or other poor sportsmanship.
4. At the end of a game, teams have 5 minutes to clean up and leave the dugout area before the next team enters the dugout area. Coaches are reminded that they are responsible for cleaning up any litter left by spectators in the viewing areas. Snacks must be moved away from the dugout after the game concludes.
5. A coach shall not use cigarettes or cigars (electronic or otherwise), nor use or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at any game or practice. Any violations will result in immediate and permanent dismissal from coaching in the OPBA. Note: All coaches, parents and spectators are reminded that alcohol is not permitted on Park District property pursuant to and enforced by Chicago Ordinance and subject to the City's enforcement policy.
6. A coach or player ejected for any reason will automatically be suspended for the next game. If the same coach or player is ejected from a second game, in the same division or in any other OPBA league division, within the same season, he or she will be suspended indefinitely and will be required to appear before and appeal to a disciplinary committee made up of board members and subjected to a vote before any reinstatement.
7. Only team members and their respective recognized coaches (including a designated scorekeeper) are allowed on the team bench or in a team's dugout area during a game. Spectators are not allowed on a team bench for any reason. All players are to remain on the bench except for the player at bat, the "on deck" player, and a pitcher and/or catcher warming up. Coaches not coaching a base,

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supervising a warming-up batter or pitcher, or coaching defense, must remain in the dugout/bench area while the game is being played. Coaches are not allowed in the well area or along the base line.

8. Coaches are expected to conduct themselves with the highest level of sportsmanship at all OPBA functions. Improper behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal and/or physical interference of an opposing player or coach. For example, there is to be no negative commentary about the skills or ability of an opposing pitcher or batter directed to the player, the player's team or bench, or the coach's own team. Non-compliance in a game will result in an umpire-issued warning and possible ejection at the umpire's discretion. A second non-compliance WILL result in forfeit of the game and potential dismissal by the OPBA Board from coaching in the OPBA.
9. In case of an injury to a player, the injured player may be replaced by a player from the bench. In case of an injury to a batter who cannot continue the plate appearance, the at-bat shall be vacated, i.e., the count is wiped clean and the next batter in the order is up. An injured player may return to the game after a rest of at least the remaining half-inning in which the injury occurred. Note: In case of injury to a player, a coach should seek to apply immediate first aid and/or seek emergency medical care, as necessary. If a parent or guardian of the injured player is not present, he or she should be notified as soon as possible. Park District personnel should also be notified as soon as possible, as necessary. The Park District also requires an injury report form to be completed.
10. 8U players and up are required to attend the game in complete uniform. This includes league-issued hat, jersey, pants, and closed-toed shoes (sneakers or non-metal cleats). Players must keep shirts tucked in their pants and keep hats facing forward. Players not in proper uniform will be suspended for that game.
11. It is expected that teams will run on and off the field to speed play and through position rotations.
12. There will be no other practice time at this level other than a first practice of the year in which coaches will meet the players and their parents, discuss expectations for the season, and hand out uniforms.

### III. Team Structure and Player Participation

1. Each team will have 10 or more players.
2. Coaches will divide their teams in two at the start with 4-5 players per "half" team. Half of the team will play a one inning small-sided game, while the other players will be in the outfield practicing with the coaching staff – e.g., the station drills for catching, throwing and hitting. Players will rotate between the field and outfield at the end of every inning with a goal of playing 4-6 small sided innings. No player shall play the same position for more than one inning per game. Coaches shall make an effort to exchange those who just fielded balls (pitchers or 1st baseman) with those who have not (outfielders) each inning.
3. A coach is permitted to stand-in as first baseman for the catch if needed.
4. Coaches should be in the field to position team and instruct players. The focus at all times must be on teaching proper fundamentals.
5. In case of an injury to a player, the injured player may be replaced by a player from the bench. In case of an injury to a batter who cannot continue the plate appearance, the at-bat shall be vacated, i.e., the count is wiped clean and the next batter in the order is up. An injured player may return to the game after a rest of at least the remaining half-inning in which the injury occurred. Note: In case of injury to a player, a coach should seek to apply immediate first aid and/or seek emergency medical care, as necessary. If a parent or guardian of the injured player is not present, he or she

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should be notified as soon as possible. Park District personnel should also be notified as soon as possible, as necessary. The Park District also requires an injury report form to be completed.

#### IV. Field and Game Structure

1. **All innings will be tee-ball, with base paths at 50'.**
2. The home team is responsible for providing the hitting tee.
3. There will be no umpires and volunteer coaches run the games.
4. **All games will consist of 55 minutes of maximum field time** with a focus on small-sided games in the infield and practice stations in the outfield. During the practice session, both teams will be combined and the coaches shall run station to station drill focusing upon the following baseball skills:
  - Ready, break, throw
  - Fielding of the baseball
  - Running the bases
  - Swinging without throwing the bat
5. All games must end no later than 5 minutes before the start of the next scheduled game.
6. **Each batter swings until the ball is hit off the tee; there are no strike-outs.** A ball is in play if it is in fair territory and 15 feet from home plate. The final batter runs around the bases for a home run.
7. Coaches must teach fundamentals. For example, on a ground ball to the pitcher, the ball should be fielded and thrown to first base (a coach is permitted to stand-in as first baseman for the catch if needed). The pitcher SHOULD NOT field the ball and then run to tag out the runner on the first baseline.
8. Each half-inning ends upon batting around the order, regardless of the number of players (e.g., if a team only has 4 players on a half team, batter #4 will cause the inning to be over).
9. Runners advance only one base at a time.
10. No official baseball game is scored or team records kept, and an emphasis is to be placed on skills.
11. If a team cannot field the minimum number of players (at least 5 players) within ten minutes following the schedule starting of the game, then, the two teams will divide the total number of players equally. The two teams should play a game regardless of how many players are available.
12. If, during the course of a game, a player leaves midgame, all batters shall move up a spot in the batting order.

#### V. Equipment

1. Teams are required to use OPBA-league-sanctioned equipment.
2. Coaches should clearly label all team equipment and team bag with team name and age division. Head Coaches are responsible for any replacement fees incurred by the OPBA for lost equipment and equipment that is not returned to the OPBA at the end of the season.
3. All batters are required to use helmets. Facemasks are not required, but are recommended. All league issued helmets include a facemask and a coach may not remove the facemask for any reason.
4. No metal spikes allowed.
5. Games are played using the Easton Incrediball.
6. Players may use only the following bats, with a maximum diameter of 2 5/8":
  - a. Solid wood bats; or
  - b. Bats marked with the USA Baseball certification stamp, with no drop limitation.

#### VI. Batting and Base Running

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1. Coaches should change the batting order each inning and make sure that each player gets several opportunities to be last batter over the course of the season.
2. Bat safety is paramount. Coaches are required to teach all kids to carry bats by the barrel to avoid the temptation for random swings. Batters need to be aware of their surrounding area when “on deck.” Other players also need to be taught to be careful around the “on-deck” player.
3. A runner cannot interfere with a defensive player’s ability to make a play.
4. If there is a play at any base (**particularly home plate**), the runner must attempt to avoid contact and slide if necessary. If a player fails to slide, he should be taught to slide into the base. There is not an out called for failure to slide in these age divisions.
5. Base stealing is **NOT** allowed. Base runners are NOT permitted to lead off and a base runner may only leave the base upon bat contact with the ball. If a player leaves early he or she will be warned and must return to starting base.
6. A runner may **NOT** attempt to advance an overthrown ball to any base.
7. There is no bunting and squeeze plays are not allowed.