

# OZ PARK BASEBALL

## ASSOCIATION

### 6U Age Division

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

*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. ONLY umpires may decide if players are safe or out.
3. No parent or spectator will be permitted to stand at the backstop/fence directly behind the umpire from dugout to dugout. Umpires will be instructed to enforce this rule. A spectator that does not follow this rule after repeated umpire warnings may be asked to leave the field.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 OPBA board members and subjected to a vote before any reinstatement.

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8. 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, 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. It is expected that teams will run on and off the field to speed play and through position rotations.
12. Each team should practice at least once, but no more than twice, per week.

### III. Team Structure and Player Participation

1. The fielding team will have 11 players will be on the field at one time: 5 players in outfield; 4 players in infield; one pitcher; and one catcher.
2. The head coach shall ensure a fair and equal playing time rotation of the two bench slots both during the game and throughout the season.
3. Players will rotate fielding positions every inning (rotate players at start of new inning, not during an inning). Subject to player safety, no player can play the same position for more than one inning per game. This system is HIGHLY dependent on coaching organization to keep track of order – it may be best to go in order of players' uniform numbers for the batting and fielding order and write down the rotation each inning. The goal is to have every player play the infield 2 innings (depending on time limitations), and in any event at least one inning per game. If a team has more than 11 players, no player should be out of the field play for more than one inning. Keeping a book will facilitate efficient and organized player rotations.
4. The extra roster player should be kept active by a bench coach in the outfield or off to the side of the field with drills and instruction.
5. **Playing Time Requirements:** No player should be on the bench for more than 1 consecutive inning, and all players on any given team must sit on the bench for 1 inning before any other player has to sit the bench for a second inning in any one game. A player's playing time is always contingent upon them following the OPBA Code of Conduct and a coach can take absence from games and practices into account.

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6. Prior to the defensive team taking the field in any inning, a coach may substitute any player for any other player as long as it does not violate pitching regulations.
7. Umpires may be supplied for each game and are the only ones authorized to make all calls in the game – not the coaches.
8. Coaches should be in the field to position the team and instruct players, but remember that umpires will run the game and call outs. Coaches must teach players fundamentals. For example, on a ground ball to the pitcher, it should be fielded and thrown to 1st base and caught by the 1st baseman with a foot on base. It should NOT be fielded by the pitcher who then runs to tag out the runner on the 1st baseline. ***If such an illegal out is executed, the runner will be called safe.*** Conversely, on a ground ball to the 3rd baseman with runners on 1st and 2nd, the 3rd baseman should field the ball and step on 3rd. With no runners on base, the 3rd baseman should make the throw to 1st base. ***PLAYERS ARE TO PLAY THEIR POSITIONS PROPERLY***, i.e., the 3rd baseman should not play 10 feet in front of 3rd base. Instead, the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman should stay back within reason and charge short grounders when hit to make the play. Other players should not charge the ball en masse, but instead learn to remain in their assigned positions. The same player should not remain in a key position such as 1st base or pitcher (or any other position) for multiple innings.

#### IV. Field and Game Structure

1. All innings will be coach pitch, with base paths at 60'.
2. Each at bat consists of 4 underhand tosses by the coach from about 30 feet. It is within the coach's discretion to decide if individual batters can hit an overhand pitched ball, but coaches are encouraged to be realistic about this assessment. After 4 pitches, the assistant coach will bring out the tee and the batter shall swing to hit off tee until the ball is in play (with assistance from coach if needed). Again, coaches are encouraged to use good judgment as we do not want long at bats (with only 75 minutes of play and 26 batters across both teams, time is at a premium).
3. Any ball hit off a tee can result in a maximum double. Any player on base can advance a maximum of 2 bases on a ball hit off the tee (e.g., runner on 1st base must stop at 3rd base).
4. The home team is responsible for providing the hitting tee.
5. A second coach can also throw grounders to fielders throughout game to keep attention focused if the players' action slows.
6. Coaches are to encourage players to play their positions, stay in their zone (anti-scrum), and make the throw to first base. There must be a player playing 1st baseman to catch the throw, not a coach.
7. The ball/play is considered dead when a player in the infield controls the ball inside of the base paths. Coaches should instruct players to call time out upon gaining possession of a hit ball in the infield. It is the umpire's discretion as to whether time out will be granted. Once the ball/play is deemed dead, all runners must return to their bases, unless they are more than half-way to the next base.
8. Each game is scheduled for six (6) innings; however, no new inning can start after 75 minutes from the game's scheduled start time with a hard stop at 90 minutes. **Note:** Any game still being played at the hard stop time will end immediately and the score will revert back to the end of the previous inning, unless the home team has taken the lead or tied the game after having been behind at the end of the previous inning, in which event the game would end at the hard stop with the home team winning or in a tie, as applicable. Time limits including hard stop apply to all games including the last game of the day.
9. No official baseball game is scored or team records kept, and an emphasis is to be placed on skills.

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10. If a team cannot field the minimum number of 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.
11. If, during the course of a game, a player leaves midgame, all batters shall move up a spot in the batting order.
12. Any player arriving after the beginning of the game is added to the end of the batting order.
13. Each half-inning ends upon reaching 3 outs or batting around the order (whichever comes first), regardless of the number of players (e.g., if a team only has 8 players, 3 outs or batting 8 players will cause the inning to be over).

### 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. Rawlings TVB balls will be used.
6. All male players must wear an athletic cup supporter.
7. 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.
8. If a batter is found to have taken a single pitch with an illegal bat this will result in an automatic out, as long as the call is made prior to the next batter taking a single pitch. Any use of an illegal bat must be reported to the division commissioner.
9. Catcher's gear is introduced. Coaches will need to keep good written records so all players receive the opportunity to catch if they want to. The Catcher is to leave all gear on until he/she are on deck to hit. A coach or parent volunteer should be present to help remove and replace catching gear to speed innings and minimize delays.

### VI. Batting and Base Running

1. In all divisions, each team will use a continuous batting order with each player in attendance batting.
2. A late-arriving player is eligible to play in a game only if that player is available to play by the first pitch at the top of the fourth inning and must be placed in the last spot in the batting order.
3. Any batter determined to have batted out of order will result in an out.
4. 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.
5. If a player in any age group throws his or her bat, then the umpire will issue a "Team Warning." If a batter throws his or her bat after a Team Warning has already been issued to his or her team, the batter will be automatically called out with all other base runners returning to their previously occupied base.

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6. A runner cannot interfere with a defensive player's ability to make a play.
7. 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 home plate. There is not an out called for failure to slide at 6U.
8. **Base Stealing/Leadoffs:** Base stealing and leadoffs are **NOT** allowed in 6U. A base runner may only leave the base upon bat contact with the ball. Coaches are to use conservative reason when encouraging runners to advance an additional base.
9. **Overthrows:**
  - On an overthrown ball that remains in the field of play, a runner may attempt to advance a maximum of one base; however, the runner does so at his or her own risk and may be thrown out by the fielding team. Example: If a ball that is hit to shortstop and the shortstop overthrows first base, then the runner may advance to second but no further. The runner may not advance on any subsequent overthrows.
  - On an overthrown ball that leaves the field of play, all runners advance one base.
10. **Infield Fly Rule:** Not in effect.
11. **Dropped Third Strike:** No.
12. **Bunting:** There is no bunting and squeeze plays are not allowed.