



HOPEDALE YOUTH BASEBALL ASSOCIATION LEAGUE RULES

MAJOR LEAGUE COACHES GUIDE

OBJECTIVES:

- To have fun
- For everyone to participate
- To learn fundamentals and improve skills in baseball
- To provide a safe learning environment for all players.
- HYBA endeavors to create a positive atmosphere by emphasizing good sportsmanship, team environment and showing support and patience for all athletes and volunteers.

CONDUCT:

All adults, both coaches and parents, are expected to show good sportsmanship. Be as supportive as possible, praise players for making a good effort as well as when they do well.

Opponents should be treated respectfully. Do not allow your players to use abusive or discriminating language. Correct children who laugh, make fun, or make negative comments toward other children. At the end of the game both teams line up and shake hands. **“Good game”** or like praise should be used. Instruct players not to use negative comments.

SCHEDULE:

Weekday Major League games start promptly at **5:30 pm**. Weekend dates will be reserved for makeup games and practices. Please refer to league schedule for specific dates and times.

In the spirit of offering competitive baseball to our players the target number of Hopedale resident teams is greater than four. In the event that a year’s registration does not provide for this many Hopedale resident teams, the League coordinator and Hopedale Youth Baseball Board will engage surrounding towns and try to recruit some additional teams to the schedule. It is recommended no more than 8 Hopedale resident and surrounding teams are in the league. Playoffs will need to consider this many teams in the schedule. Also, HYBA League rules will need to be coordinated with these partner towns.

Whenever field conditions are questionable, the League Coordinator will determine if the game is to be played. Coaches in turn, are responsible to notify parents if the games are cancelled. Games can be made up on weekdays/weekends but must be scheduled through the League Coordinator.



ROSTERS:

Team rosters are determined by a draft of all eligible players. All players will be evaluated prior to draft. All coaches will participate in the draft with the League Coordinator as facilitator and at least one member of the board who has no affiliation with particular league. The coordinator and member(s) of the board will vote to resolve any conflict that coaches cannot agree upon.

PARTICIPATION:

A primary objective is to provide all players with an opportunity to participate as much as possible. Coaches will make every effort to allot playing time as equally as possible. In the Major League, position play is more restricted than lower leagues. Players begin to develop specific skills associated with certain positions and moving players around is not as prevalent as in the lower leagues. Players should be given the opportunity however, to try different positions if they are willing and able to do so safely. Players must play a minimum of four innings and two at bats each game and coaches are to use a continuous batting order.

COACHING:

Coaches in Major League must keep the objectives of the league in mind. First and foremost, kids should be having fun. Please be as positive as possible and refrain from negative reinforcement. No yelling or berating players for mistakes, rather instruct players on what they can do to improve. We also want our coaches to teach the fundamentals of baseball. We want the coaches teaching during games as well as practices. There are many situations that occur during games that are hard to duplicate in practice. Explain to your players what to do in these situations. In every play in baseball, players should be made to think ahead; what to do if the ball is hit to them, how many outs, whether to tag up, etc. It is up to the coaches to keep the players on their toes. Remember be active and positive!!

GENERAL RULES:

HYBA has adopted pitch count rules as determined by Little League International:

- **Maximum pitches per game: 85**
 - 0-20 pitches – no days of rest required
 - 21-35 pitches – one day of rest required
 - 36-50 pitches – two days of rest required
 - 51-65 pitches – three days of rest required
 - 66-85 pitches – four days of rest required

For example, a pitcher who throws 20 pitches on Monday may pitch again on Tuesday. If he throws 66 pitches on Tuesday, he may not pitch again until Sunday.



- Each team must designate a person responsible for counting pitches. Teams should reconcile pitch count after each inning. When a pitcher reaches a pitch count maximum, he is allowed to finish that batters at bat.
- Curve balls or other breaking pitches are not allowed.
- A coach must remove the pitcher on the second visit to the pitcher in one inning. A pitcher cannot pitch again in the same game if removed from the mound earlier in that game.
- Balks will be enforced. First infraction will be a warning per pitcher, 2nd+ balks thereafter will be enforced by the umpire.
- Umpires will be provided for each game.
- Coaches are to use a continuous batting order.
- A batter is not allowed to “slash” bunt. A batter that fake a bunt and then takes a full swing will be out, the ball will be dead and no runners advance.
- No metal spikes.
- A maximum of five runs per ½ inning is allowed. The only exception is the 6th inning during which there is no run limit.
- Playoffs:
 - No standings will be kept during the season. A playoff round robin will be scheduled at the close of the season by the League Coordinator. Coaches are expected to maintain an atmosphere that is fun for the children and are cautioned to curtail competitiveness which is not congruent with the league’s objectives.

BASERUNNING:

Players should avoid contact into 2nd, 3rd and home whenever there is a play at the base. Failure to avoid contact will be an umpire decision to call the base runner out. The umpire’s call is not subject to protest. Head first slides into an advancing base are not allowed. The player will be called out. A player may slide head first when returning to a base.

Runners are allowed to lead off.

EQUIPMENT:

It is the responsibility of each coach to maintain equipment for the entire season. Please do not lend out equipment for any purpose. Equipment is to be used for your team’s games and practices only. Please regard equipment as if it were your own. It is the largest expense of running the league and we count on the coaches to help keep it in good condition. If you have equipment which is showing wear and tear please notify the League Coordinator. If necessary the League Coordinator will repair or replace.

Baseballs should not be passed out after games. Please retain the game balls to use for practice. Please turn in all baseballs you have left at the end of season. These will be used to begin the next season’s practices. Home team coach will supply 2 new balls for the game.



SAFETY:

Helmets with cages will be provided by HYBA and available for all players. Players and parents who provide their own baseball helmet will have the option to play with or without the cage. The player on deck must be wearing a batting helmet and remain in the on-deck area. Keep all equipment and players except on-deck batter behind the dugout fence. Bench coaches should ensure that everyone but the on-deck batter remain sitting on the bench. Bench coaches should also be aware of other personnel (younger children) coming near the on-deck area.

The League maintains complete first aid essentials, including ice packs, at the concession stand.