

Machine Pitch Division
Spring Playing Rules 2026
4/16/2026



Machine Pitch advances players from tee hitting to hitting moving balls at a consistent speed. Play becomes slightly more competitive and scores are kept, but the focus continues to be on having fun and fostering a love for baseball.

1. **Length of Game.** A game lasts a maximum of 1 hour and 15 minutes. A new inning shall not be started after 1 hour and 5 minutes from the scheduled start time. No extra innings will be played. If an inning is not complete when the 1 hour and 15-minute time limit is hit, the game will revert back to the previous completed inning as the final score.
2. **Forfeiture of Game.** Forfeiture of games should be rare; a minimum of 6 players are needed to field a team. The opposing team should help with outfield players if necessary. All effort should be made to play games or hold a joint practice if enough players are not present.
3. **Warm-up.** Warm-up time is provided for each team before the game. To allow for proper warm-up each player should arrive at least 20 minutes before a game. Each team is limited to using the outfield for any warm-up activities. Once the game begins, there will be no throwing of balls except on the playing field. In an effort to keep the game moving, infield should not be taken between innings.
4. **Defense.** Teams will play with 4 infielders, 4 outfielders, a pitcher, and a catcher, for a total of 10 players. Traditional positions must be used and shifting is not allowed. The pitcher position shall be located within 4 feet of either side of the pitching machine. The pitcher cannot be in front of the machine until the ball reaches home plate.
5. **Playing Time.** No player should sit the bench for a second inning until every player has sat for 1 inning, and no player shall sit the bench for 2 consecutive innings. Players must play in the infield and outfield every game. Any player on the bench the previous inning must play 1 of 6 infield positions the next inning. No player should be in the outfield for more than 2 innings until every other player has been in the outfield for 2 innings. Players should be rotating between positions in both the infield and outfield every game (e.g., Kid A plays first base, centerfield, and shortstop in game 1; Kid A should not play those positions again in game 2 until they have played other positions first). The only exception to this is catcher as it is understood not all kids want to play catcher. Player safety remains the number 1 priority. If a coach believes a player can not safely play pitcher, catcher, or 1st base they must be placed at the other 3 infield positions. A player arriving late to the game is to play a minimum of half the remaining game.

6. **Batting.** A continuous batting order shall be used with all players present. The continuous batting order will continue all season.
7. **On-Deck Hitters.** On-deck hitters are not allowed to hold or swing a bat until it is their turn to bat; there are no on-deck circles. The only player that is allowed to hold a bat is the player up to bat. No practice swings until a player gets to the plate.
8. **Pitching Machine.** The home team shall provide the machine for their game with the visiting team bringing a backup machine in case there is a mechanical issue. The speed of the machine varies about 3 MPH, and speed is registered after pitched from the machine. The speed should be as follows: 32-34 MPH to begin the season; 34-35 MPH at the mid-point of the season or at the discretion of the Machine Pitch Coordinator and MP Rules Committee. The pitching machine shall be set before the game starts and agreed upon by both managers. Adjustments of the machine should typically not occur during an inning unless several (4 or more pitches) consecutive pitches are judged to be "balls." However, because Machine Pitch is a learning experience, coaches should work together to make sure the machine is giving kids an opportunity to hit (e.g., if an adjustment to the machine is needed, coaches from both teams should talk about it and agree on changes that would best help kids learn). Place the machine in front of the pitching rubber, with the back leg touching the front of the pitching rubber.
9. **Run Limit.** There will be a 5-run limit per inning.
10. **Base Running.** A base runner may leave the base when the baseball crosses the plate. Stealing is not allowed. If it has been determined that the player has left early, i.e. before the ball has crossed the plate, the play is immediately called dead. The offending player will head back to the original base. Players may take a "secondary" lead once it crosses the plate but may not advance to the next base until the ball is put in play by the batter. Players must slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or be called out; player must slide feet first when attempting to advance a base and can slide head first when returning to a base. Once the ball is controlled by an infielder in the infield dirt, "time" can be asked for by that player. If the base runner is halfway or more between bases, then the base runner will stop at the base he/she is running to. If the baserunner is less than halfway they return to the previous base. Base runners are only allowed to take 1 extra base per play on infield throwing errors. If the ball goes out of play or touches the boundary fence, the runner can advance 1 base max at their own risk. After advancing 1 base the runner can no longer advance until the ball is put in play again (see Example 1 below). For balls that are hit into the outfield, runners may advance until an infielder controls the ball and requests "time." If the runner is less than halfway when time is granted they must return to the previous base. In this situation, if a play is made on a runner, resulting in an infield throwing error, the runner may only advance 1 additional base at their risk. We are trying to play within the confines of a normal baseball play and do not want to see any "bush league" base running.
Example 1: Ground ball to the Shortstop, overthrow to 1st base, runner can go to 2nd.

Runner cannot advance further until the ball is put in play again, regardless of where the ball is when the runner gets to 2nd or if a play is made on that runner.

11. **Courtesy Runner.** If the next inning's catcher is on base with 2 outs a courtesy runner must be used for the catcher, and may be allowed with 1 out. The goal is to speed up the game, not create a competitive advantage. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out during the inning.
12. **Bench/Dugout.** A coach or adult must be in the dugout at all times when kids are present during the game. NO EXCEPTIONS! Coaches must remain in foul territory when their team is on defense.
13. **Zero Tolerance Policy.** Little League Baseball and Wauwatosa Little League have a zero tolerance policy. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Each participant and fan should treat players on each team, coaches, umpires, and fans with respect.
14. **Judgment Calls.** Coaches, players, and fans shall not argue with coaches regarding judgment calls. Only the head coach is allowed to engage the umpire for a rule interpretation or to get an explanation of a call he/she does not understand.
15. **Equipment.** All players must be properly equipped for games in accordance with Little League rules. Helmets must stay on the player's head until the player reaches the team bench. A player throwing a helmet, bat, or equipment will receive a warning. If a second offense occurs during the game, the player will either be called out (if bat) or removed from the game (if helmet or equipment). All male catchers must wear an athletic supporter with a cup. Athletic supporters with cups and mouthguards are encouraged for all players. All bats must conform to Little League standards, meaning all bats have a USA Baseball sticker. USSA bats are not allowed.
16. **Park Safety and Field Clean-up.** After each game, each team is responsible for cleaning up the ball field and their respective bench or dugout. All managers, coaches, players, and fans should abide by county park rules. Teach the kids to leave the park better than they found it.
17. **Enforcement of Rules.** Managers and coaches are expected to help enforce Wauwatosa Little League playing rules to ensure the safety of players, coaches, and fans. In addition, an umpire or a Wauwatosa Little League Board member has the right to ask any player, coach, or fan to leave the park. If the offending party refuses to leave the park, the umpire or Board member has the authority to suspend the game, and if necessary, call law enforcement authorities.