

Shetland League Guidelines (Instructional T-ball)

Shetland T-ball is designed to introduce young players to baseball in a fun atmosphere without pressure while attempting to teach some basic fundamentals of the game. Therefore coaches are allowed on the field during play to **assist, instruct, position** and **encourage** players. Keep instructions simple, straight forward and repetitive; teach the proper fundamentals of fielding and positioning. Be careful not to obstruct any fielders' path or vision while in the field of play.

Dugout

1. Home teams use the first base dugout and are responsible for getting the bases out prior to the game and placed back in the box at the conclusion of your game. Home team will also provide the game ball.
2. **Coaches must assign** a parent to keep all players **inside the dugout** and prevent them from climbing on the fences or benches. This parent must keep their attention on the dugout during the play of the game. This is a challenging job because it is often difficult for the players in this age to stay focused on the game. The dugout parent must also read off the batting order. If other help is available, he/she can assist the batters with their helmets.
3. On-deck batters should have their batting helmet on for safety as well as in the interest of keeping the game moving along.
4. **On-deck batter should not be given their bat until entering the field for turn at the plate.** The on-deck batter cannot be past the dugout entrance until the play is dead and they are instructed to come to the plate by the coach.

Batting Procedure

1. **All batters must wear a helmet, whether in a game or during practice**
2. **All batters have an opportunity to have the first 3 pitches thrown to them. If the batter is unable to get a hit, the ball will then be placed on the tee. They will then have 3 additional chances to swing at the ball for a hit off of the tee. This will be in effect for the entire season.**
3. If the ball is not hit into play, the coach, not the catcher, will replace the ball on the tee.
4. Bunting and base stealing are not permitted, nor are lead offs from a base.
5. **The batting team bats through their roster each inning**
6. The batting order must be changed so a different player leads off and finishes the order every inning.

Player rotation / Fielding

1. **All players must play a defensive position every inning.** No player should play in the same position more than two innings.
2. **All players must play every position** during the course of the season. The coach's responsibility is to be certain that all players are rotated in a fair and organized manner. Parents expect this rotation to occur in a smooth and organized manner; be prepared to manage the game accordingly.
3. If two pitchers positions will be used; both pitchers **must** wear a protective helmet with faceguard and a heart guard.
4. The catcher will wear a Chest protector and Catcher's helmet with mask and throat guard

Base Running

1. Again the purpose of this league is to prepare the players for older age leagues. Teach players the basics of base running. All players should understand how to **run through** the bag at first base by the end of the season when the ball is hit in the infield. If the ball is hit into the outfield you can have them advance to second base so they get used to the base coaches signals, which should be exaggerated to convey to the players. This league should not consist of round the base running except for the last batter in the order.
 - a. No advancing the runners on overthrows or defensive errors
 - b. All runners 1 base when ball is hit in infield
 - c. At coaches discretion, all runners maximum of 2 bases when ball is hit in outfield

Making an Out

1. In "real" baseball, an out is an out, but for the purpose of this league the entire roster will bat every inning. During the 1st half of the season, keep players on base, even if an out occurs to provide them with some base running experience. Starting after Memorial Day break, if an out occurs then the player should precede back to his/her respective dugout. All players need to learn this and some will take it better than others but they need to know this is part of the game.
2. 3 outs DO NOT end the inning (#5 under Batting Procedure takes precedent)

General

1. Practices are recommended to be 1 hour, but not to be more than 1 ½ hours.
2. Remember coaches that one of your responsibilities is to provide a positive and **enjoyable** experience for all players.
3. No new inning will begin after 60 minutes from start of game. An inning will be deemed complete when both teams bat their roster.