

## COACH PITCH DIVISION

These WLALL Coach Pitch rules are in addition to Little League Official Rules. To the extent the following rules are inconsistent with the Little League Official Rules, these rules are controlling.

### I. General

1. The teams do not keep score, and there are no league standings or playoffs.
2. The Manager or Coach who is pitching serves as the informal umpire for calls regarding outs in the field. (Be fair and remember this an instructional league and not a competitive one).
3. Games will last no more than three (3) innings. No new inning shall be started after 50 minutes. This gives each team 10 minutes to clean the dugout and field for the next game or practice. Managers shall agree on the official game start time prior to the start of the game.
4. The Manager or coach for the team batting shall pitch overhand from a **kneeling** position. The Coach/Pitcher should not throw from the rubber, but rather from the front of the mound or closer to the batter, but not closer than 20' from the back of home plate.
5. Players must be rotated defensively from inning to inning to give everyone a chance to learn all positions (see Section III.8).
6. Only RIF Level 5 baseballs may be used.

### II. Offense

#### A. Batting

1. Each team hits through its lineup once per inning (i.e., all batters hit every inning). The last batter, following their at-bat, shall run the bases to complete the half-inning.
2. The batter shall be allowed seven (7) pitches to get a hit after which at the Manager's discretion, they shall be sent to first base. Except:
  - a. A foul ball on the seventh pitch entitles the batter to an additional pitch. Additional pitches will be awarded if the batter continues to hit foul balls.
  - b. A throw which hits the batter shall be a "no pitch" and not count against the batter as one of the seven (7) pitches.
3. Any ball hit in fair territory is a fair ball and in play, regardless of how far the ball is hit.
4. There shall be no called strikes and no walks.
5. Batters shall not bunt.
6. 1st and 3rd base coaches must be the Manager or one of the two (2) assistant coaches. A parent volunteer cannot be in the dugout or coaching on the field

unless they have submitted a background check and been approved by the league prior to volunteering.

**B. Baserunners**

1. Baserunners may only attempt to advance one additional base (at risk) on any overthrow of a base and may not advance further on subsequent overthrows on the same play. Successfully taking the one base stops the play and the ball must then be returned to the adult pitcher. "Overthrow" means any throw that is not caught, whether due to a throwing error or a catching error.
2. Runners are not allowed to steal (including stealing or advancing on a throwback by the catcher toward the pitcher).
3. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit.

**III. Defense**

1. Outs occur according to the standard rules of baseball. When a batter/runner is out, they shall return to the dugout. Coaches should not let players run the bases who are "out" on the bases.
2. All players shall play in the field every inning. Defensive positions shall include seven (7) infielders (catcher, pitcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, and a rover who shall play at or around 2<sup>nd</sup> base) and up to five (5) outfielders (LF, LCF, CF, RCF, and RF). If fewer than twelve (12) players are present, eliminate an outfield position first and then the rover.
3. The adult pitcher may not position him/herself closer than 20' from the batter.
4. The player playing the position of pitcher shall begin each play with at least one foot on the pitcher's mound to one side of the adult pitcher.
5. A player may not play more than one (1) inning at the pitcher position during a game.
6. The first, second, and third basemen, and the shortstop must start each play in the vicinity of the base path between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base and not in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound.
7. Outfielders must be positioned at least 10-feet from the infield arc until the ball is hit and may not make unassisted outs in the infield except by catching a fly ball.
8. Each player shall play at least one complete inning (assuming a three (3) inning game) at an infield position.
9. Play is stopped when the ball is thrown to the kid pitcher or the base in front of the lead runner. Any runner who is not beyond the halfway point to the next base at the time the ball reaches the kid pitcher or the base in front of the lead runner shall return to the previous base. The adult pitcher should get any ball that is thrown in their direction if it appears that the defense is attempting to stop play by getting the ball to them. All decisions by the adult umpire concerning whether a runner should return to a base are final.
10. Up to three (3) coaches can be in the field when their team is in the field to help "instruct" players, but they shall not interfere with play, help a player, or touch the ball.

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11. The Manager or one of the assistant coaches for the team on defense MUST stand behind the catcher at the backstop to help retrieve balls and speed up play.
12. The infield fly rule shall not be called.

### Here is a list of ten points to keep in mind:

1. Keep things simple and safe.
2. Avoid technical information.
3. Teach basic fundamentals.
4. Use easy to understand terminology and use it consistently.
5. Adopt the kids' slang and apply it to your baseball teaching.
6. Celebrate players' individual talents and differences.
7. Work in small groups or "stations."
8. Keep things interactive and fast moving.
9. Involve parents as your helpers. Any volunteers who help at practice, in the dugout during games, or on the field when filling in for an official coach must complete a background check and be approved by the league in advance of them volunteering.
10. Whenever possible, create competitive games during drills or when wrapping up a drill.

### Tips for Coaches:

1. As a coach, get organized and develop a practice plan and game positioning by inning prior to practices and games. Learn as much about Coach Pitch and baseball as you can.
2. Remember to present your material in kids' terms. Successful coaches know their audience and use analogies and common visual imagery for their coaching tools. For Coach Pitch players, these images are best when they are a bit dramatic.
3. Don't assume anything. Go over all the basic playing and safety rules, including where the bases are, defensive positions, which way to run to 1<sup>st</sup> base, when to start and stop running, how to hold a bat and glove, and the number of outs, innings, foul balls, etc.. Make it clear the only player who can hold a bat is the player hitting in a game or at practice and that a ball should not be thrown to another player unless that player is looking at the player throwing the ball. There is no on-deck circle. A player should touch a bat until it is their turn to bat.
4. One of the most difficult things a coach has to do is coach their own child like any other player. Remember to be a coach on the field and a parent off the field. If possible, have your assistants instruct your son or daughter to avoid conflicts.
5. Coaches need the assistance of their players' parents. Parents are normally willing to help out, but are usually reluctant to come forward unless asked to assist. If you give them specific things to do, they will be more comfortable. All volunteers must first complete a background check and be approved by the league.
6. On the field, you have to be a teacher as well as a coach. Teach them what they need to know, show them what you taught them, practice the things you taught them over and over, then be prepared to do it all over again
7. To make the most of your practice time, break the team up into two or three

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groups, depending on the number of coaches. This will enable you to keep more kids occupied and less bored. Remember the attention span of a 5-6 year-old is measured in minutes.

8. The game: Sit the players on the bench in the batting order. No one should have a bat in their hands. Horsing around on the bench will translate into foolish behavior in the field and injuries.

9. Keep the parents informed as much as possible. An ideal handout will have a schedule of practices and games and the times and location. It is important to include your phone number and try to insist that parents call if their child will not be at a game or practice.

## **Coach Pitch Skills Checklist**

Throwing is one of the most important skills in baseball. Stress to your players that accuracy is more important than speed. Teach them to bring their arms down past their hip before bringing the arm up to throw over the top and not side arm.

### **Windup:**

Bring the throwing arm back and up, turn your front shoulder so it is pointing at the target. The glove hand points toward the target. The arm extends behind the body with wrist cocked and elbow bent:

### **Delivery:**

As you start your delivery, pick up the lead foot and stride toward the target. As the lead foot touches the ground, the hips rotate toward the target. Release the ball in front of the body and follow through. Always look at the target throughout out the throw.

### **Follow-Through:**

The follow-through ends with the throwing arm down in the front of the body and the feet almost parallel, in a balance ready position.

### **Catching:**

A major defensive skill is catching. Initially, some players will be afraid of catching a baseball. That fear will make them flinch right before the ball reaches their glove. This will cause them to drop the ball instead of catching it, or worse, the ball may hit them. This can create a fear that can eventually cause players to quit. Teaching players the correct catching technique is not easy. You must first overcome their fear of getting hit with the ball. Demonstrate that the ball is softer than a standard hard ball. You might want to work with some of your players with a tennis ball for the first couple weeks.

### **Hitting:**

Hitting a baseball is probably the most difficult skill to master in baseball. Five separate hitting components should be taught to young players: grip, stance, stride, swing and finish.

### **Grip:**

Grip the bat firmly (don't squeeze) hands together above the knob with the middle knuckles lined up. Players at this level should be encouraged to hold the bat until contact is made and to then drop the bat vs. throwing it.

### **Stance:**

Players should be comfortable in the batter's box. Don't try to make every batter assume the same stance, but do stress the following three basics:

- **Stride:**

The stride is a trigger motion to begin the motion of the shoulders hips and knees

as the pitcher releases the ball. This will become a more useful tool as the players develop but for now a small stride of the front foot toward the mound will be a good start to force some weight distributions and begin their swing sequence.

- Swing:

The legs and hips initiate the swing. Eyes on the ball, shoulders level, bat and head steady. The swing should be level to slightly downward to bring the bat through the center of the ball. Watch the bat hit the ball; keep your head down. Extend arms and follow through. Focus on making contact and not swinging too hard.

- Finish:

Balanced position when the swing is over. Do not watch the ball. Drop the bat and run hard to first base.

### Baserunning:

Run on the balls of the feet. Look at the base you are running to, not where the ball went. Run outside the foul line. Teach the players to run straight through 1st base; don't jump on it or slow down. Watch and listen for coaches' instructions. Keep one foot on base leaning forward until the batter hits the ball and use the base to push off. Know where the ball is. When running the bases, touch the inside corner. Make sure to touch every base.

### Practice Tips:

-Batting: Practice, Practice, Practice. Work with small groups using a tee and go over the five components of hitting. Hit into the fence or a net when the field is being used for other drills.

-Bounce to the bucket: Use a large basket or bucket and place it on the base. Outfielders try to throw it into the container. Can be done as a game with 10 points for in the bucket and 5 for hitting the bucket and 1 point for two feet either side of bucket

-Catch: Two or more players play catch. Keep track of the number of successful catches. See how many you can catch in a row they can catch.

-Catching Flies: Hit or throw fly balls to fielders. Throw ball right to the player to develop confidence and then toss ball to right or left. During this drill you can introduce someone coming over to back up the play. Make sure to instruct the use of two hands.

-Coach in the Middle: Circle the kids with the coach centered rolling the ball or tossing to each player. For practice have the kids field the grounders without a glove, to reinforce the use of two hands.

-Crab Drill: Player is in basic fielding set position stance, crouched forward with glove open and down. Player takes three or four steps as the coach rolls the ball.

-Track meet: Player stands at home plate with bat in hand. Coach claps hands and player drops bat and runs hard to first base. Time how long it takes to get to first and record it. Run drill later in season and see if there is any improvement.

Remember: You should be satisfied if the kids have fun, learn the basics of baseball and are enthused to play again next year.