



Rookie Division
2022 Plan & Rules

The Rookie Division is designed for new and returning players. The fundamentals in the popular “Intro to Baseball” format are continued with skill development and a fun game environment. This is a progressive level adaptive for both new to sport and returning players from either the T-Ball Division or what was previously the Mini Minors Division (2021 and before). There is intended to be flexibility in this structure for this group of predominantly 6- and 7-year-olds from school grades 1 and 2. The goal for the older and advanced players is that the last session of this level for them should provide them with the opportunity for it to look somewhat like the first session of the Minors level.

Program Overview:

This is not a competitive division as scores and standings are not kept. This is a progressive level of baseball.

Weeks	Mindset	Hitting Benchmark	Game Style
1-3	Introduction to Sport/Level	Coach Toss / T3	Infield only + Drills
4-5	Leveling up	Pitching Machine (slow) / T3	Infield only + Drills
6-7	Transitioning to Full Games	Pitching Machine (medium) / T2	Outfield as appropriate by Coaches pre-game, “outs” optional
8-10	Full Games	Pitching Machine (faster)	Full Games with “outs”

The Hitting Benchmark is noted as just that, a benchmark. There will be a wide range of players in this group and we want to cultivate early success and development progression. The coaches are free to adjust based on the players, either slower pitch, more Tee use, and faster/slower Pitching Machine pitches by using the foot-bar. There will be slightly different field sizes between Maple Grove Park South (MGPS), Quilchena North (QN) and Kerrisdale South (KS), please be aware of these differences and adjust according to your teams’ capabilities. T3=Tee for 3 swings or T2 = T for 2 swings. Speed settings for the Pitching Machine will be shared in season along with which ball type (Tennis, Incrediball, Level 1, Level 5).

Highly encouraged to complete each game with a Base Race. And if the roster sizes are highly unbalanced between teams, it is encouraged to share players to make for quicker innings and rotations (also can apply to coaches if you see a team with only 1 coach vs 3 coaches, it really helps the games and the players).

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RULES:

All Little League baseball rules will apply in addition to those listed below.

Please avoid arguments at all costs! If a situation arises where a decision cannot be reached, please send the base runners back to the bases before the play commenced and replay it.

Games:

1. Games will begin with a set warm-up starting 15 min prior to the game start time. Please start the game on time.
2. Games are scheduled for 1 hour and 15 minutes subject to weather; try to finish the final inning with enough time for a base race.
3. There is no full-time umpire, it is deemed that the Pitching coach will act as the 'umpire'. The Pitching Coach should ask for assistance from coaches (either team) that have a closer look when a close play occurs. It is the goal to ensure the best calls as there are no scores or standings kept at this level.
4. Adult base coaches are permitted at 1st and 3rd bases (one coach per base) and must stand in foul ball territory only when outfielders are in use, coaches can be behind the infield players during the beginning of the season.
5. On Deck - There is NO "on deck" circle due to safety reasons. No players other than the batter should be swinging bats during the game. The player "on deck" and all other players must remain in the dugout waiting for their turn to hit. There must be a coach or parent present in the dugout with the players at all times while they are waiting for their turn to bat.

Set-up:

1. Home team is responsible for field set up (to be completed not less than 20 minutes before game time) and take down (unless the next game teams are on-site already and the equipment can be left for that next game). This includes installing the bases, setting up the pitching machine, painting the base paths from home plate to first base and from home plate to third base, painting the batter's boxes, painting the dead ball circle around the pitching machine and painting the pitcher positioning lines on either side of the dead ball circle.
2. In the event a game is rained out or otherwise postponed, the teams involved may re-schedule and complete the game at some later date. Please contact the Division Coordinator for field availability.
3. Dugouts - Home team takes the third base line dugout while the visiting team takes the first base line dugout.

Hitting/Pitching:

1. Teams are highly encouraged to follow the Hitting Benchmark plan on Page 1 and upon agreement between both team coaches, may be modified for stronger or weaker teams. This discussion must occur before the game between the team coaches. It can be determined by the coaches prior to the game (and prior to outs being used) to extend the maximum pitch count from 5 to up to 10 so long as it feels that the game can flow smoothly and it does not slow the pace of play too much for the rest of the players on both teams.
2. The pitching machine should be placed 35 feet from home plate.
3. The hitting teams' coach will operate the pitching machine. Under no circumstances may a child operate the pitching machine either during the game or at practice.
4. A circle measuring 6 feet in diameter is to be marked with line paint around the pitching machine. This is referred to as the "dead ball circle". A ball hit cleanly through the circle is a fair ball and in

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- play. Any ball that comes to rest within the dead ball circle, or that hits either the pitching machine or the pitching coach, is a dead ball. The pitch is replayed and no runners advance.
5. If a player fields the ball from inside the dead ball circle and makes an out, the hitter and all runners will be deemed safe. Please stress to your players the safety concerns around them rushing into the circle where the pitching machine is located to field the ball.
 6. There are no walks.
 7. Kids to be encouraged by coaches to swing at each pitch that is delivered to home plate at a reasonable height at or around the strike zone. Each batter is entitled to a minimum of five pitches, unless they have a hit first. If, in the coaches' discretion, a pitch is determined to be unhittable, the pitch shall not be counted in the pitch count. A pitch that is outside of the strike zone is not automatically considered to be "unhittable". The most common pitch that should not be counted is one that comes into home plate very low. The goal is to encourage the players to swing and keep the game moving along while at the same time not encouraging bad habits such as swinging at wild pitches. If a batter does not swing at a pitch that is in your opinion, hittable, please call the pitch a strike and count it as one of the 5 pitches.
 8. When the season has progressed where games include "outs", a strike out occurs if the batter is unsuccessful in hitting the ball after 5 pitches. If the 5th pitch is a foul ball, the batter shall remain "alive" and will continue to receive additional pitches until the batter either makes a hit, or does not make contact with the ball on a pitch. Upon striking out, the batter is considered to be "out" and shall return to the dugout. A batter is to be called out if he/she throws the bat.
 9. Teams hit through their lineup in order.
 10. All batters and base runners must wear helmets. Batters and baserunners are not to remove helmets until they are back in their dugout.
 11. Bunting is not permitted.

Base Runners:

1. Stealing - There is NO stealing.
2. Lead Offs - Runners are not to leave the base until the pitched ball has been hit. In the event a base runner leaves early on a base hit (in a force situation) and reaches the next base safely, it is the umpire's discretion to either allow that runner to advance to that base, or call that runner out if it is felt the base runner may have been out had they not left early.
3. Runners may only advance one base on a hit.
4. When progressing to "outs" as determined by the coaches collectively prior to the game start:
 - a. On hits to the outfield, a runner may continue to advance until the ball has been returned to the infield (by crossing the plane into the area inside the proper baselines and backstop. The goal is to encourage outfielders to throw and not run the ball back into the infield. As such, it is not necessary for an infielder to catch or control a ball that has been thrown into the infield in order to stop the runners. However, a ball that is run into the infield by an outfielder will not be considered "returned to the infield" until such time as control of the ball has been passed to an infielder. If a runner is not more than halfway between bases at the time the ball is returned to the infield, the runner must return to the previous base. If the 'umpire' determines that a runner was not halfway to the next base when the ball was returned to the infield, the runner shall be sent back to their previous base.
 - b. If there is at least one runner on base when a ball is hit to the outfield and the runner(s) is(are) on adjacent bases, then it is the lead runner's position when the ball is returned to the infield which will determine whether runners may or may not advance to the next base. For example, if the batter hits the ball to the outfield and is more than halfway between 1st and 2nd when the ball is thrown back into the infield, BUT the lead runner who is directly ahead

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- (between 2nd & 3rd) is NOT more than halfway between the bases, then both runners must return to the previous base.
- c. Overthrows to First base – batters cannot advance to second base on overthrows to first base.
 - d. Overthrows to Second base – a runner cannot advance to third base on an overthrow that initiates from the infield, or an overthrow that initiates from the outfield and is considered “returned to the infield”. However, if a ball is thrown by an outfielder to second base and the ball remains in the outfield (e.g. thrown from left field and the ball ends up in right field) then the runners may continue advancing until the ball is returned to the infield.
 - e. Overthrows to Third base – no runs can be scored on an overthrow to third base. This is to encourage players fielding the ball to attempt to make the out rather than playing it safe.
 - f. Tagged Outs – A runner that is tagged out between bases while the ball is live is out.
 - g. Overruns – Unless the umpire has called a dead ball, a runner may be tagged out upon overrunning a base (including on a return of the ball to the infield or on an overthrow). Runners turning left at first base may be tagged out.
 - h. Sliding - For safety reasons, if there is even the slightest possibility of a play at the plate, base runners must slide into home or umpire will call them out. No head first sliding is permitted at any base or the runner is out.
 - i. Fly Balls - Where a batter hits a fly ball that is caught, the batter is out. Tagging up on fly balls is not permitted. Base runners advancing off their base on a fly ball that is caught may be tagged or thrown out at the base they left. Infield fly rule does not apply.
 - j. Blocking Progress - Unless they have the ball, or are in the process of fielding a ball, fielders are not to block the base runners' progress by standing on the base paths. If this occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base that they are progressing to.

Fielding:

1. Unless otherwise agreed between the coaches, a maximum of 10 players may play in the field at one time. Infield positions are pitcher, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, shortstop and 3rd base. Outfield positions are left, centre and right field and if 10 players, centre left and centre right field. Catchers must wear all catcher's equipment as provided (players graduating to Minors next season will need to have some experience as catcher as this is a key position in the Pitching Divisions and the teams/league need to develop some players well in this position).
2. The fielding team is allowed to have only one player playing the position of pitcher either to the left or right of the pitching machine – it is recommended that this position not be filled until the hitters are consistently hitting. The pitcher is not permitted to be positioned closer to home plate than the side of the pitching machine. A small line should be painted on either side of the dead ball circle indicating where the pitcher can be positioned.
3. Players in the position of 2nd base and shortstop are allowed to be positioned no closer than 3 feet inside the base path towards home plate when a pitch is being delivered. Players at 1st and 3rd may be positioned no closer than 6 feet in front of their bases.
4. The defensive team is allowed one coach in the outfield or behind the infield when no outfielders are playing to provide instruction (but who may not touch the ball). There is no defensive coach allowed in the infield.
5. Outfielders are allowed to be positioned no closer than 15 feet behind the base path when a pitch is being delivered.
6. For player development purposes, each player should be given the opportunity to play each fielding position on a rotating basis unless there is a concern for the player's safety in playing that position. Coaches should use their reasonable efforts to ensure that no player plays the same position twice in



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the same game, and favouritism should not be given to better players when allocating infield positions. Pitcher and 1st base are key positions and a player should not play either of those positions twice in the same game if possible.

General:

1. Defensive substitutions are unlimited, and substituted players can re-enter the game. Before an outfield is used, rotation and substitution is highly encouraged during the inning.
2. Catchers must wear a cup, and it is recommended that all players wear cups for every game and practice.
3. All equipment should be kept in the dugout area away from the field of play.
4. Arguing between coaches will not be tolerated and coaches or parents who do so may be ejected and asked to leave the park. Please report to the Player’s Agent and/or Division Coordinator any inappropriate behaviour.

Practice Plan Methodology:

First and foremost, the kids should be having fun!!!

The program is centered around Five Cores – Throwing, Catching, Hitting, Fielding, and Running/Agility.

Each practice session will incorporate all or most of the Cores with the objective of giving the players the opportunity to progress their development each week.

Goals for Players:

Throwing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Players should be able to grip a ball and throw across the body - Most of the time able to hit a target
Catching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able to throw a ball into the air and catch repeatedly with two hands - Playing Catch regularly with a teammate - Be able to catch on either side of body
Fielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run to the ball, scoop with two hands, glove in front - Know where to throw the ball - Go to your correct base/position, trust in teammate to get ball
Hitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper stance - Swing flat - Small Step and Hip Twist - Solid connection through ball - Can hit to outfield off pitching machine
Agility/Running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run through first base to the outside - Foot beside base always – “Face the base you came from” - Rounding bases, step on the inside corner of the base - “Ready position” is instant when prompted