

# Bloordale Baseball League

## House League Rules

### 7U (T-Ball)



#### GENERAL BLOORDALE PRINCIPLES

The goal at Bloordale is to provide young people with an opportunity to enjoy the game of baseball and at the same time to develop their athletic, social and interpersonal skills.

For all those who volunteer to coach, it is our goal to be fair to all players, fellow coaches, umpires and parents. We should always be good role models by promoting sportsmanship and fair play at all times.

All players are entitled to equal playing time and should be encouraged to play all positions.

The rules of baseball, and exceptions as approved by the Ontario Baseball Association, apply to Bloordale House League Baseball. This document highlights the Bloordale Baseball modifications to these rules.

No rules will be changed, deleted or altered in anyway without consultation from the Umpire in Chief and League President.

All Coaches, players, umpires, spectators, and league officials shall adhere to the Bloordale Code of Conduct that can be found on [bloordalebaseball.com](http://bloordalebaseball.com).

#### 7U SPECIFIC GOALS

- Build self-esteem and confidence in young players, while introducing them to the game.
- Teach the game as simple as possible at a rapid pace to maintain attention spans.
- Focus on the essentials of the game, including team building and good sportsmanship.
- Each player is entitled to equal play in the infield and should learn all positions.
- Players learn defence by fielding, throwing to build arm strength, and knowing the right play.
- Rewards for hitting are spread throughout the batting order.
- Teams can score on both offence and defence.

- Games will be run for a maximum of 4 innings of play, or 1 hour and 15 minutes. If there isn't enough time for the last inning, the final score will revert to that at the end of the 3rd inning.

## DEFENCE AND FIELD SETUP

- The field will be set up by the coaches prior to the game as a shared responsibility.
- Six defensive players are on the field at one time. All other players rotate in each inning according to the rotation schedule.
- Five players are the minimum for a game. Any less is a default for the team that is short, and loses the game for purposes of the standings. Instead of a real game, the losing team's players should be blended with the other team's players to practice in a "fun" game.
- There is no catcher and there are no outfield positions.
- Positions are: Pitcher (P), First Base (1B), Right Rover (RR), Second Base (2B), Shortstop (SS), and Third Base (3B). Right Rover (RR) covers an area within the infield but can be anywhere on the right side of the diamond.
- The rotation of players from inning to inning is in the order indicated above. All players must rotate through each position to get experience in all spots. This includes the requirement to put all players at the "skill" positions of Pitcher and 1st base, regardless of their ability. The only exception to this rule is for a safety concern if the child has difficulty paying attention or is overly nervous of playing those positions.
- Pitchers are required to wear a batting helmet.

## BATTING/OFFENCE

- An inning constitutes batting six players in the order arranged by the coach prior to the game.
- If a team has 6 players, you moved down the batting order each inning, first inning (1-6), second (2-6, 1), third (3-6, 1, 2), fourth (4-6, 1-3).
- If you have 7-9 players, you move down the order based on where you left off in the previous inning.
- If a team has five players, the first batter in each inning bats twice and the batting order and rotation is maintained.
- The maximum score on offense is six runs per inning.
- All hitters hit off a tee.
- The batting team has a coach behind the plate to help instruct and set the batter for hitting. This coach is also the umpire for that half of the inning. The umpire places the ball on the tee and play commences only after he/she checks that all fielders are paying attention and yells, "Play ball," loud enough for all fielders to hear and which then allows the batter to swing.
- Each hitter is permitted 5 swings (strikes) to hit the ball. After that an out is recorded.
- Despite a player's skill level, no player will be permitted more than 5 swings to keep the game moving.
- Hits must pass an arc drawn between the foul lines, a reasonable distance between the plate and the pitcher's rubber. This is called the Dead Ball Line and prevents bunting. Bunting and weak hits are not allowed as they would benefit the offence given the lack of a catcher. A hit ball not passing the Dead Ball Line is considered a strike and is counted as the max. 5 swings.

- Hits in the infield are a single. The batter and each runner on base may only advance a maximum of one base. **There is no advancement on an overthrow in t-ball.**
- Hits first touching the infield and rolling to the outfield are a double. The batter and each runner may advance up to a maximum of two bases. It is expected however, that the defensive players will run down the ball and make a play, hence the ‘advancing up to a maximum of two bases’. Again, there is no ability to advance on an overthrow beyond the two-base maximum.
- Hits first touching the outfield in the air without an infield are automatic home runs and all runners and the batter run the bases to home plate.
- There is no stealing in t-ball. All runners must have one foot on their base until the ball is hit. If in the opinion of the umpire there was a lead off, there will be **one warning** allowed per team; each subsequent violation will result in an automatic out and score one point for the defensive team.

## FIELDING / DEFENSE:

- Players must rotate through the positions. No player shall play a position more than one time in a game so that each player learns all positions on the field.
- An out occurs the same way as in regular baseball except all outs are force plays to prevent injury from tagging at this young age.
- Each out made by the defensive team earns them a point toward the final score of the game. Six outs per half inning is the maximum defensive score.
- For safety reasons, when the play commences, all fielders must be between the line between 1st and 3rd base. The pitcher must be on the rubber.
- A maximum of two defensive coaches may be in the outfield only. They may call time out to enter the infield to reposition or otherwise guide their players but the umpire shall not call, “Play ball,” until the defensive coaches have all returned to the outfield. This is to ensure the children have no distractions or obstructions once play commences.
- Players need to be encouraged to try and make a defensive play on every live hit, regardless of whether the batter/runners are already safe. This ensures players are developing their skills of throwing and catching. There is no advancement on overthrows and no penalty for attempting a play.
- Throws should be overhand in all circumstances except where one would expect an underhand throw, e.g. very close distance. Rolling the ball will not result in an out and the runner will be declared safe even if the play is made.
- Players must play their position. We are trying to teach the skills of throwing and catching at this level so the ball must be thrown for any normal distance one would expect a throw to be made in regular baseball. Fielders are not allowed to run across the whole diamond to make a play. For example, a quicker 7-year-old shortstop can’t pick up a ball and run to 1<sup>st</sup> base to make an out on a slower 5-year-old runner. In this case the runner would be declared safe.
- Better players are also not permitted to “steal” the ball from a teammate in order to make a play. This is T-Ball and everyone gets a chance. For example, if the ball is hit to the player on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the shortstop may not cut in front to make the play because they are a stronger player. The shortstop should be taught the skill of covering their teammate in this instance, as this

allows the player to whom the ball was hit to make the play. This also teaches the skill of proper positioning which will be useful in the higher levels. An out made by a player who “steals” the ball as described here, will result in the runner being declared safe.

- A caught fly ball results in the batter being declared out. All runners may advance to the base they were approaching without tagging up (too complicated for this age), but are in peril of being put out by the defense. For example, the runner leaving 1st could be potentially out if a fielder touches 2nd before he/she gets there, but cannot be put out at 1st base for not tagging up. They may choose to stay on the base that they started on with no consequence.
- A play ends with a throw back to the pitcher who then throws the ball to the offensive coach behind the plate to be put on the tee for the next batter.
- On the sixth batter, prior to putting the ball in play, the umpire will yell “Last batter.” The defence may still make an out at any base to earn a point, but runners will continue to run all the bases in an attempt to get home (i.e. the max one or two base rule does not apply on last batter). The inning ends when the ball is thrown to the pitcher who steps on a second safe plate placed 4-6 inches in front of the normal home plate/tee. This is for safety reasons and to prevent a collision with both the pitcher and runner approaching the same plate from different directions to get the final out. When the pitcher steps on his/her home plate each run scored prior to that counts one for the offensive team and each runner that did not make it home prior to this counts as one run for the defensive team. No other defensive players may enter the home plate area to make an out for safety reasons. A successful or unsuccessful attempt for an out at a base other than home plate does not stop the play on last batter, only the pitcher stepping on the defensive home plate does.

## SPORTSMANSHIP

- While the umpire is a member of the offensive team, his/her call is final for that half of the inning and there are to be **no public disagreements** in front of the children. Anything that really requires a conversation, and this should be very rare, should see the two head coaches, and only the two head coaches, meeting off to the side, well away from the players and parents, and having a brief discussion in a very low and quiet tone.
- Teams will shake hands after every game with no negative commentary or teasing either during the game or the handshake.
- Coaching for this level is all positive reinforcement and teaching. We are trying to get kids interested in baseball and negative reinforcement from a non-parent has a much greater chance of scaring them away.
- Parents should volunteer to provide snacks (usually juice and a treat) on a rotational basis after each game. This helps build team spirit and kids love this part of the game. Please provide snacks that are marked as nut-free to protect players and siblings with allergies.
- Parents and coaches should ensure all litter is picked up and that the field left in good condition (rake as necessary).

## OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Fielders should hold their positions on the last batter until all runners are home to avoid collisions.
- Keep an eye on the bats. Only the player at bat should be holding a bat. T-ball players do not need to warm up “on deck” at this level. If a coach wants to work with a player one-on-one, this should not be on the field of play and must be away from the spectators seating area. There are too many kids wandering around that could be seriously injured by an errant swing.
- Each team receives one warning per game for a thrown bat. Any infraction by any player on the same team following the warning is considered an out and scores one for the defence.
- Other than the batter at the plate, the players on offence should be sitting on the bench cheering on the batter.
- If runners are coming home, it is the umpire’s responsibility to remove the tee from the plate following a hit so that runners can safely run through home plate.
- A double safety base is used at 1st. The red side sits in foul territory and is for the runners and the white side sits in fair territory and is for the fielders. Runners can run through 1<sup>st</sup> base and touch the red side, without stopping. The 1<sup>st</sup> base field should touch the white side to prevent collisions or stepping on the player.
- There is to be no climbing fences or playing in the equipment boxes which have very heavy lids.
- When thunder roars, GO INDOORS! If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. Take shelter immediately. If you cannot find a sturdy, fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing, get into a metal-roofed vehicle. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.